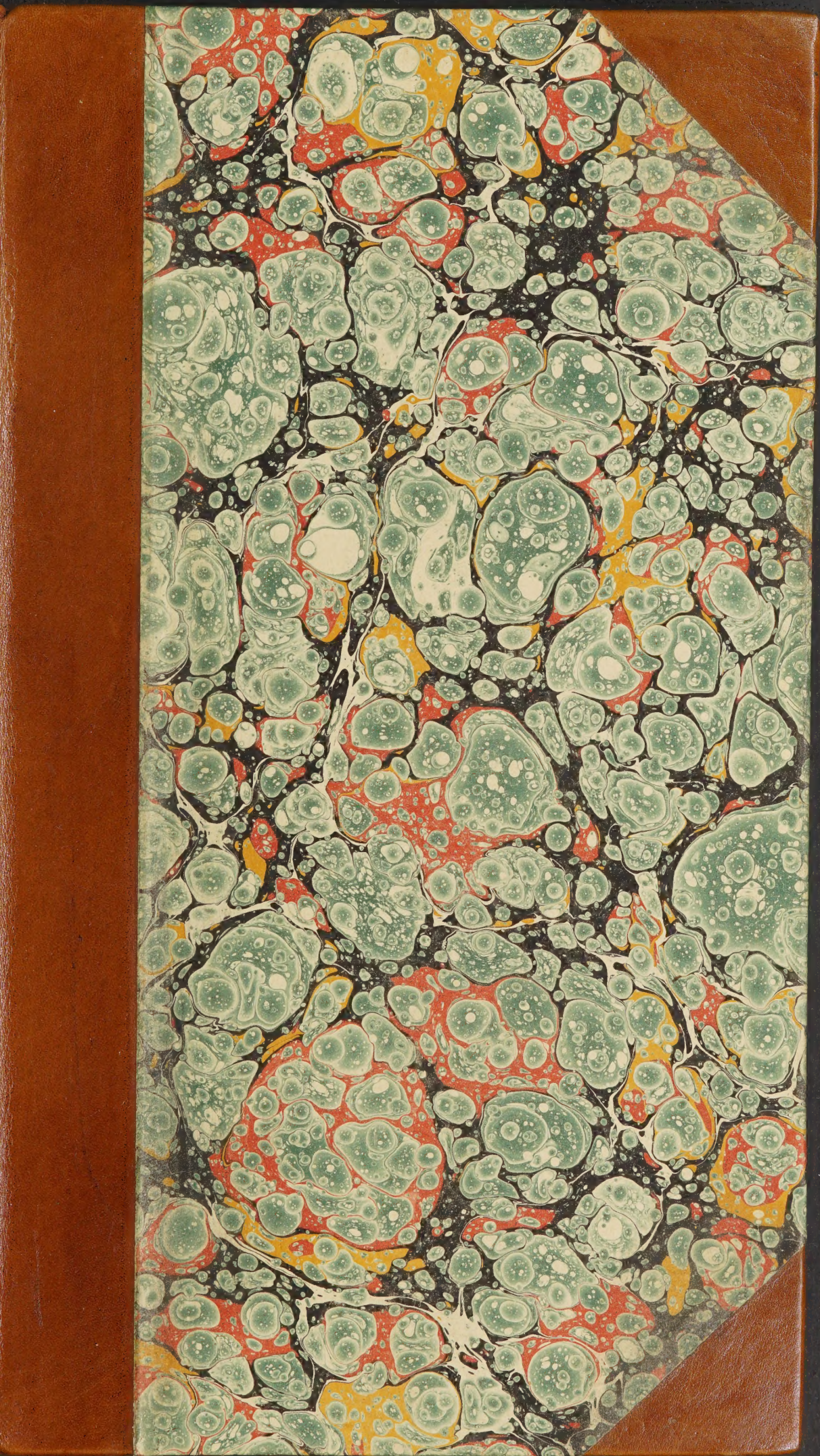


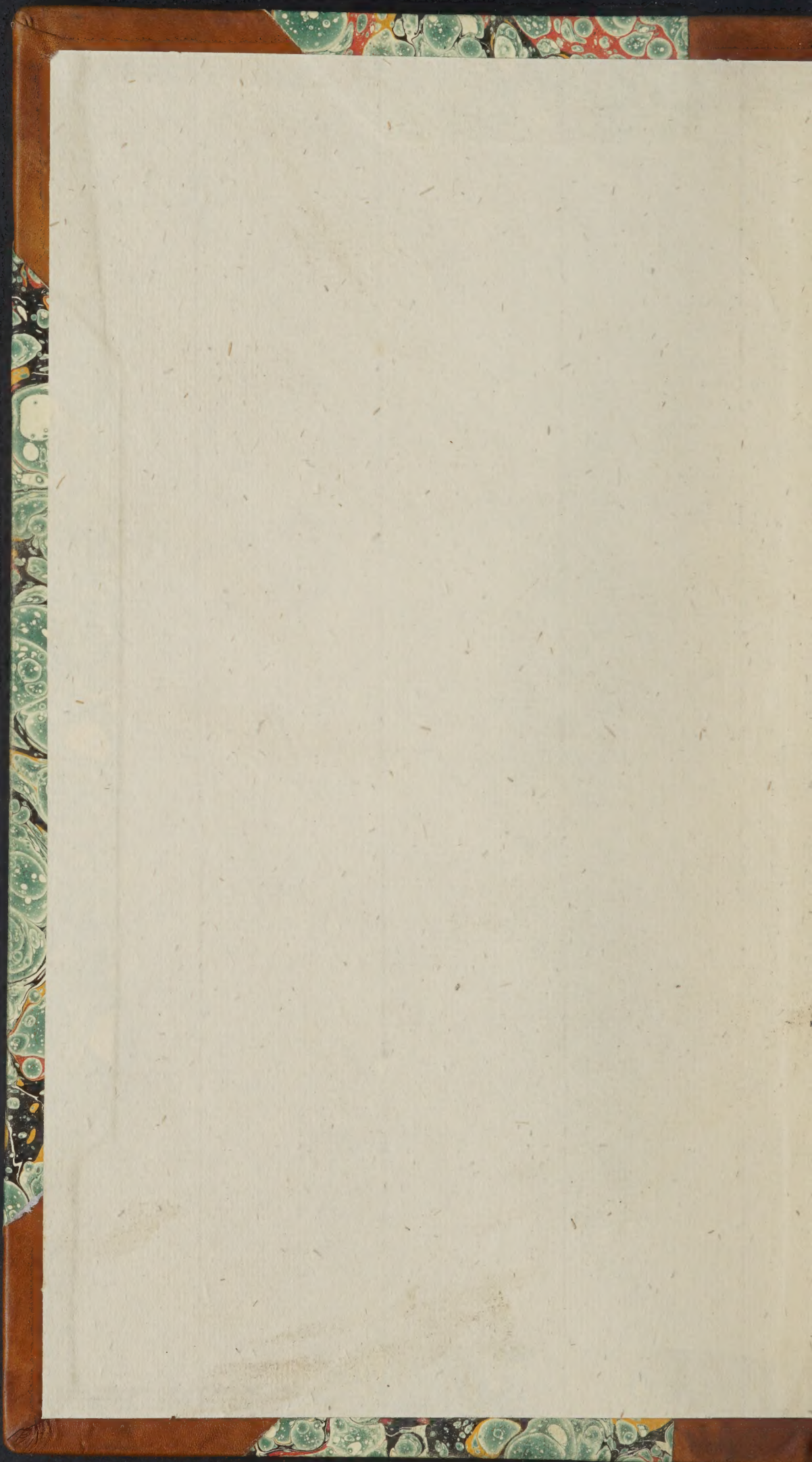


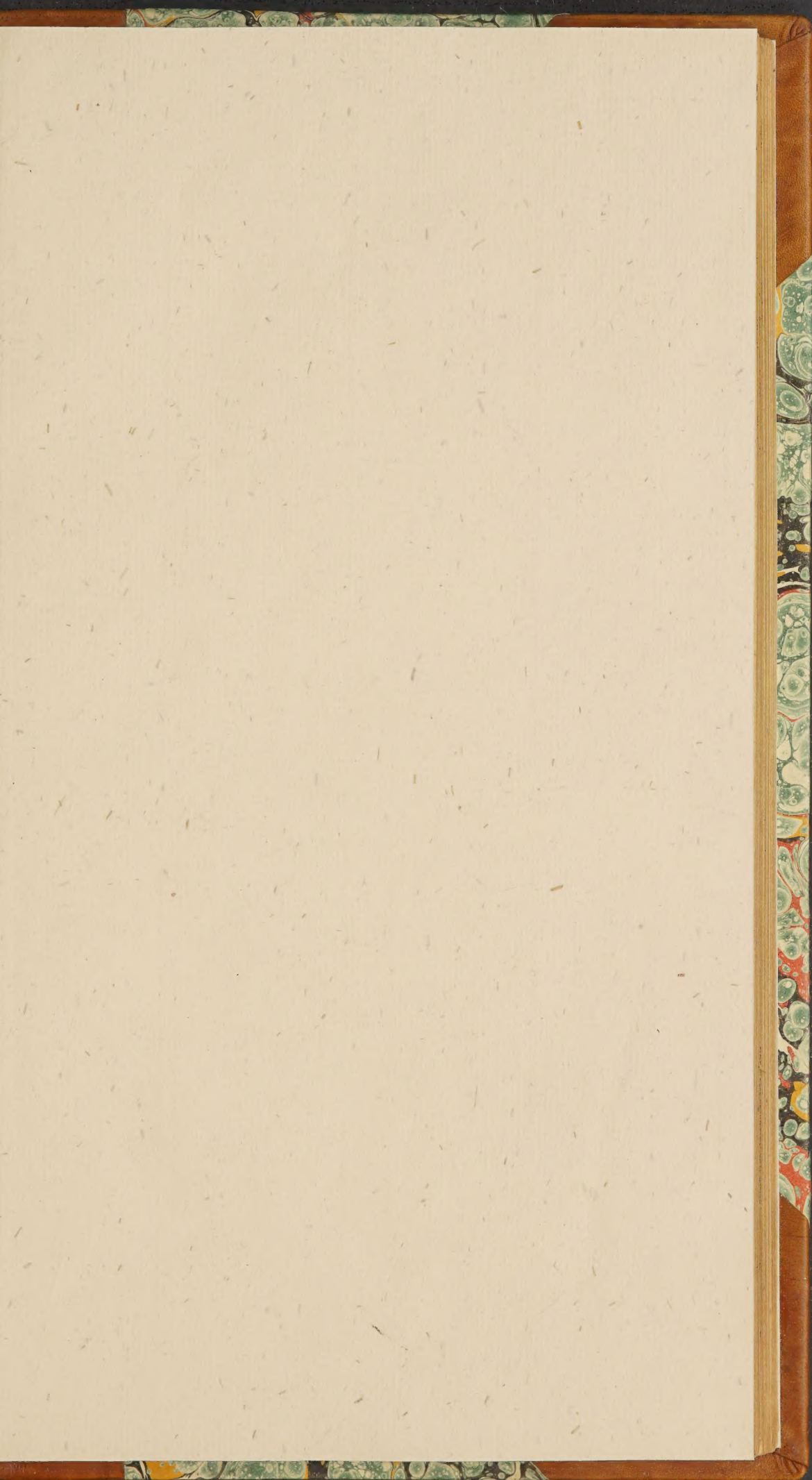
VORTIGERN AND HENRY THE SECOND

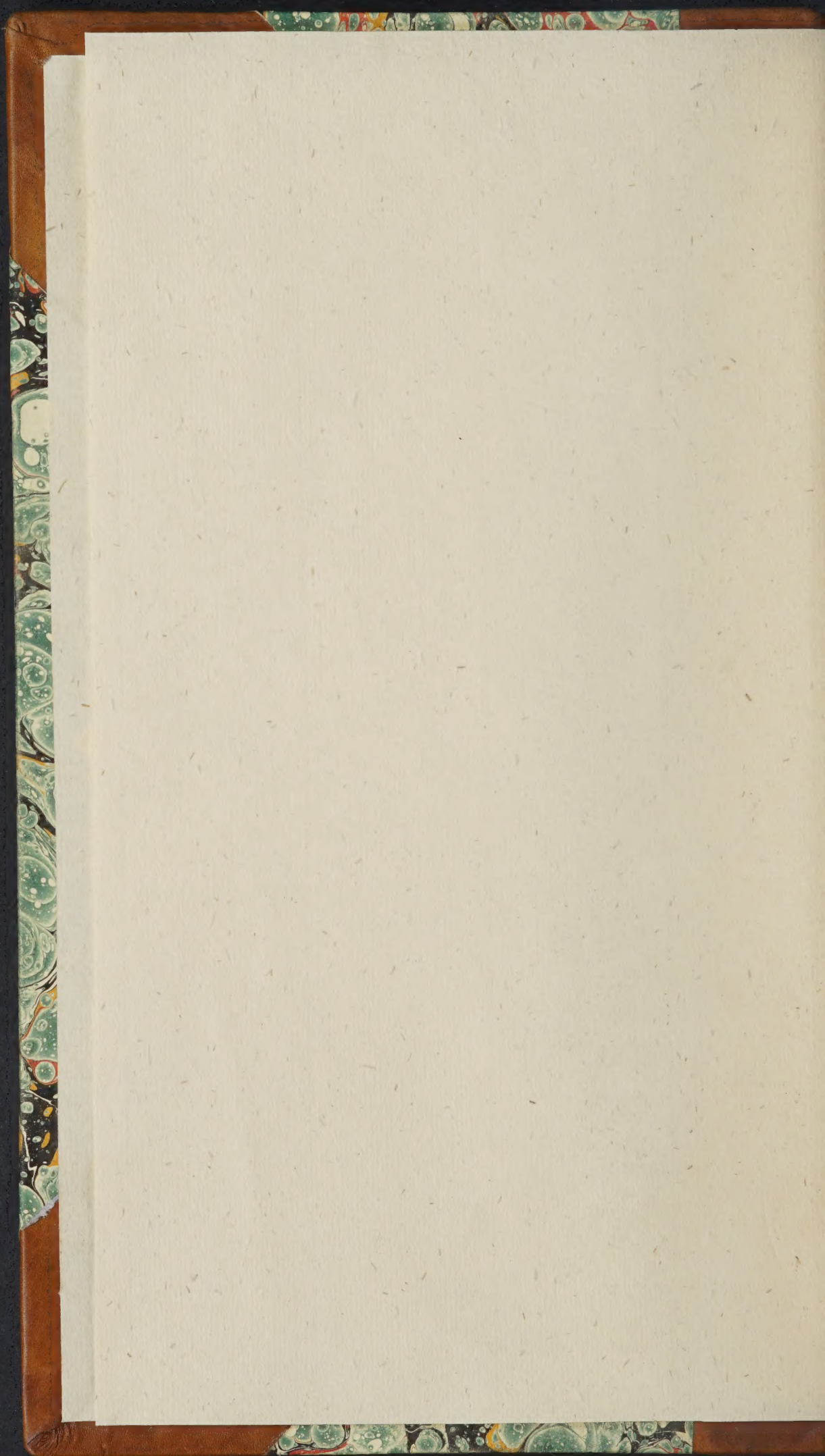




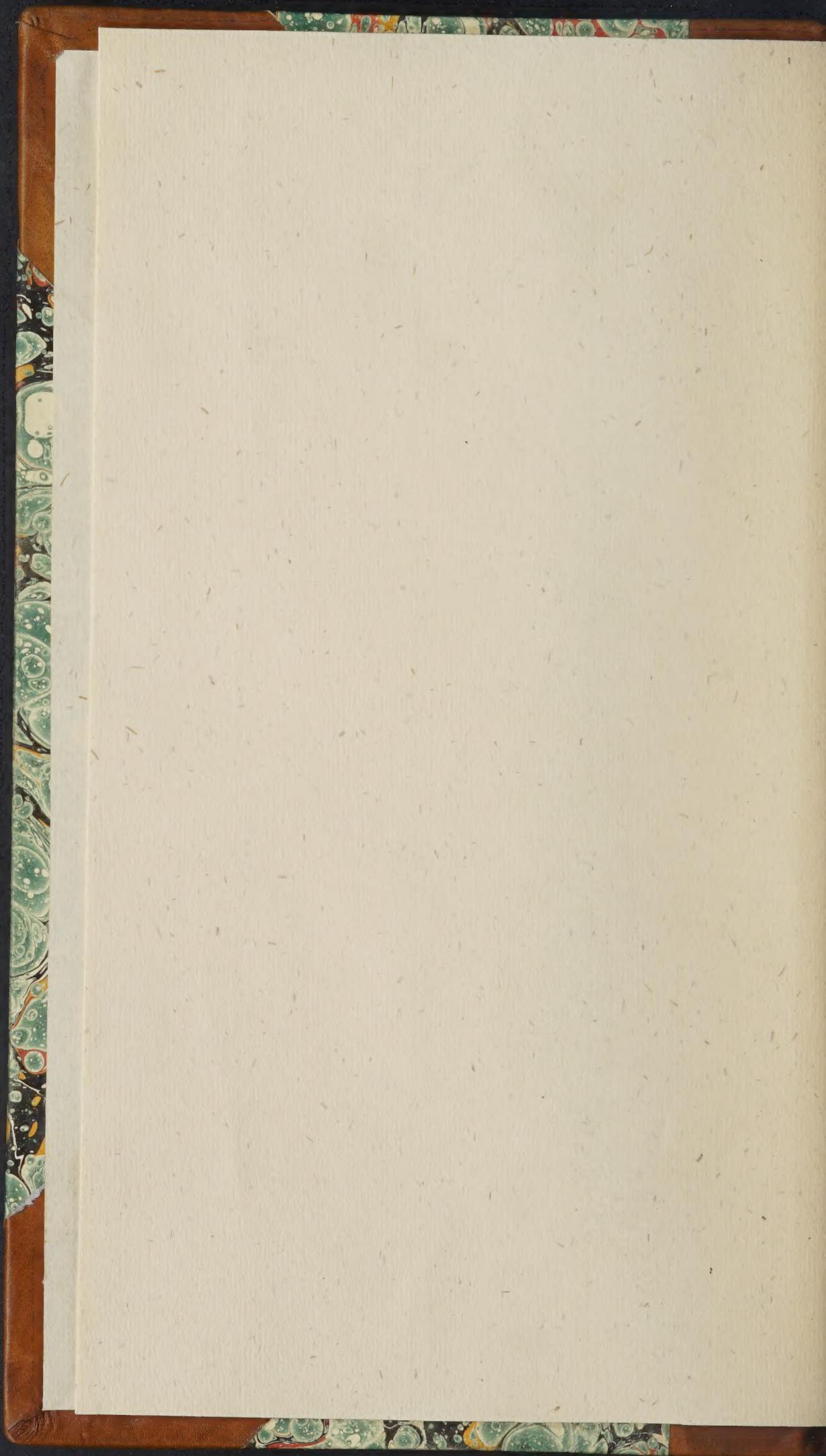












N^o. 3

*A. B. Hughes;
From the Editor*

VORTIGERN,

AN

HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

REPRESENTED

AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

AND

HENRY THE SECOND,

AN

HISTORICAL DRAMA.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN

BY THE AUTHOR OF

VORTIGERN.

LONDON: PRINTED FOR

J. BARKER, RUSSELL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN;

B. WHITE, FLEET-STREET;

T. EGERTON, CHARING-CROSS;

AND R. FAULDER, BOND-STREET.



VORTIGER, N,

A N

HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

REPRESENTED

AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE,

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1796.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. BARKER,

Dramatic Repository,

GREAT RUSSELL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN.

1799.



P R E F A C E.

IT is now near three years since the Play, which the following sheets present to the Public, was represented at the Theatre Royal Drury-Lane. The fate which it underwent, and the decision of the audience, are well known. Notwithstanding that decision, the Editor has at length, agreeably to his promise, made at the time of that representation, again laid it before the public, which if it exposes it to the test of a more accurate criticism, will give it the opportunity of a more unbiassed and temperate examination.

They, who are at all conversant with dramatic concerns, must know that the opinion of large assemblies, promiscuously composed of all orders and classes, must depend on a variety of circumstances, local, temporary and accidental.

Where no stronger or worse motives interfere, fashion and caprice too often give the direction; but spleen and interest are made more powerful agents; and by their industry and activity, even the master puppet, be he in sock or buskin, may be gained, and the public may be too easily and

unwarily led by premature and precipitate conclusions.

No man who recollects what was said and written in the public prints concerning this piece, on the eve of its representation, and the ludicrous manner in which the principal character was sustained, can deny, that the Editor has a right to complain of the most illiberal and injurious treatment.

Every undue stratagem, and every mean and petty artifice, was resorted to within doors and without, to prejudice the public mind; and one more deeply interested than had then, or has yet appeared, though a professed trader on the subject of Shakespeare, on the day before the representation, under the title of "An Enquiry into the Authenticity of certain miscellaneous Papers, &c. &c." with this view, and the further expectation of helping off a few copies, sent into the world a volume long before promised, and long since forgotten.

This mass of dulness and self-conceit, consisting of about 430 pages, established nothing; and was built on principles (if it is not an abuse to apply to such trash a term so respectable) that could not possibly establish any thing. In every one of the instances which, with such a weak and overweening confidence, he so very idly brought forward, he has been exposed; and in some of them

has

P R E F A C E.

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has been himself the author and detector of his own childishness, incapacity and ignorance.

Neither the index-lore, or the alphabetical, lexicographical, labours of this sagacious discoverer, or his congenial followers or associates, nor any declaration since made from a quarter once domestic to the Editor, through which something like genuine information might naturally have been expected, can induce him to believe that great part of the mass of papers in his possession are the fabrication of any individual, or set of men of the present day.

A fruitless expectation, that Time, the discoverer of Truth, might ere this have withdrawn that veil of mystery which yet involves this transaction, has alone given occasion to delay in this publication. The Editor had been happy to have been able to have penetrated it; and to have assigned to its proper owner each fragment and each whole.

As to the merits or demerits of the play now before the public, the Editor does not in the smallest degree consider himself responsible any where, or in any way. He sold the piece with "all its
"imperfections on its head," after various cool and deliberate readings, and stated candidly all he had been told relative to it; all that, which
from

from various circumstances, he had at that time no reason to doubt or discredit.

After the play was contracted for, some alterations were deemed necessary to fit it for representation. It was much too long, and consequently many passages were expunged; and in one historical fact, thought too gross for the public ear, viz. the incestuous passion of the king towards his daughter, it underwent some further alterations; but excepting these particulars, it stands nearly as in the original.

In this state it was delivered to the Theatre, with a request, or rather *intreaty*, that all further alteration, deemed necessary, should be made by the acting manager, or any other person competent to the business: to this request he received the following official answer from Mr. Kemble:—“That the play would be acted faithfully from “the copy sent to the theatre;” and it was accordingly acted, literally from the Manuscript delivered to the house. This conduct was, as the Editor believes, unprecedented in the management of a Theatre, and must warrant him in concluding that in the judgment of the acting manager, the play wanted no aid or alteration.

Be these matters as they may, this piece is laid before the public with such interpolations by
the

P R E F A C E.

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the Editor, as he presumes it was the duty of the acting manager to have made previous to its representation.

The lines printed within the inverted commas were not in the play-house copy, and consequently were not spoken.

The Editor feels, and here begs leave to acknowledge, his obligations to his friend William Linley, Esq. for his skill in composing the three songs in this piece, in which he is universally allowed to have shewn much taste and judgment; he likewise professes himself much indebted to Mrs. Jordan and Mrs. Powell, for their very spirited exertions, and excellent acting on this occasion; and could he with truth or justice make the smallest acknowledgement to Mr. Kemble and his fellow tragedian Mr. Phillimore, he has little doubt, but that, whoever may have been the author of the piece, it might still have been received, and might have promoted the interests of the Theatre.

Norfolk-street, 2
Strand, 1799. S

P R O.

PROLOGUE,

INTENDED FOR

VORTIGERN.

Written by JAMES HENRY PYE, Esq. P. L.

THE cause with learn'd investigation fraught,
Behold at length to this tribunal brought,
No fraud your penetrating eyes can cheat,
None here can Shakespeare's writing counterfeit.
As well the taper's base unlustrous ray
Might strive to emulate the orb of day,
As modern bards, whom venal hopes inspire,
Can catch one spark of his celestial fire.
If in our scenes your eyes delighted find
Marks that denote the mighty master's mind,
If at his words, the tears of pity flow,
Your breasts with horror thrill, with rapture glow,
If on your harrow'd souls impress'd you feel
The stamp of nature's uncontested seal,
Demand no other proof—nor idly pore
O'er mouldy manuscripts of ancient lore,
To see if every tawny line display
The genuine ink of fam'd Eliza's day.
Nor strive with curious industry to know
How poets spelt two centuries ago.

But

PROLOGUE.

ix

*But if these proofs should fail ; if in the strain
You seek the drama's awful fire in vain,
Yet in our ancient legend should you trace
Truth's genuine features, tho' of humbler grace,
Condemn not rashly—o'er the forest glade
Tho' the oak spread no patriarchal shade,
Yet may a shrub of no unlovely green
With vivid foliage deck the sylvan scene,
Some tuneful notes the vocal woodlands fill,
And soothe the ear, tho' philomel be still.
Then each extraneous matter laid aside,
By its own merit be our drama tried.
Forget the prejudice of rigid art,
To read the code of nature in the heart ;
Consult her laws, from partial favour free,
And give, as they decide, your just decree.*

PROLOGUE.

Written by Sir JAMES BLAND BURGESS, BART.

Spoken by Mr. WHITFIELD.

NO common cause your verdict now demands,
Before the court immortal Shakespeare stands;
That mighty master of the human soul,
Who rules the passions, and with strong controul
Thro' every turning of the changeful heart
Directs his course sublime, and leads his powerful
art.

When on his birth propitious nature smil'd,
And hung transported o'er her favourite child,
While on his head her choicest gifts she shower'd,
And o'er his mind her inspiration pour'd;
"Proceed," she cried, "the high decree fulfil!
"'Tis thine to rule with magic sway the will,
"On fancy's wing to stretch o'er boundless space,
"And all creation's varied works to trace;
"'Tis thine each flitting phantom to pursue,
"Each hidden power of verse to bring to view,
"To shed o'er British taste celestial day,
"And reign o'er Genius with unrivall'd sway."

Such was the high behest—the sacred choice
Long has been sanction'd by your candid voice;
The favour'd relics of your Shakespeare's hand
Unrivall'd, and inimitable, stand.

If

P R O L O G U E. xi

If hope of fame some modern bards has led
To try the path where Shakespeare wont to tread,
If, with presumptuous wing, they dar'd aspire
To catch some portion of his sacred fire,
Your critic pow'rs the vain attempt repell'd,
The flimsy vapour, by your breath dispell'd,
Exposed the trembling culprit to your fight,
While Shakespeare's radiance shone with doubled
light.

From deep oblivion snatch'd, this play appears :
It claims respect, since Shakespeare's name it bears ;
That name, the source of wonder and delight,
To a fair hearing has at least a right.
We ask no more—with you the judgment lies ;
No forgeries escape your piercing eyes !
Unbias'd then pronounce your dread decree,
Alike from prejudice and favour free.
If, the fierce ordeal pass'd, you chance to find
Rich sterling ore, tho' rude and unrefin'd,
Stamp it your own ; assert your poet's fame,
And add, fresh wreaths to Shakespeare's honour'd
name.

D R A-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CONSTANTIUS	- - -	Mr. Bensley.
AURELIUS	- - -	Mr. Barrymore.
UTER	- - - - -	Mr. Caulfield.
VORTIGERN	- - -	Mr. Kemble.
WORTIMERUS	- -	Mr. Whitfield.
CATAGRINUS	- - -	Mr. Trueman.
PASCENTIUS	- - -	Mr. C. Kemble.
HENGIST	- - - - -	Mr. Benson.
HORSUS	- - - - -	Mr. Phillimore.
FOOL	- - - - -	Mr. King.
SERVANT	- - - - -	Master De Camp.
PAGE	- - - - -	Master Gregson.
EDMUNDA	- - -	Mrs. Powell.
FLAVIA	- - - - -	Mrs. Jordan.
ROWENA	- - - - -	Miss Miller.
ATTENDANTS ON		Miss Leake.
EDMUNDA	- - -	Miss Tidswell.
		Miss Heard.

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c. &c.

VORTIGERN.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

A large Hall, discovers CONSTANTIUS, VORTIGERN,
WORTIMERUS, CATAGRINUS, PASCENTIUS,
and Attendants.

Constantius.

GOOD Vortigern! as peace doth blefs our ifle,
And the loud din of war no more affrights us,
And as my foul hath plac'd thee next herfelf,
'Tis our desire that thou deny'ft us not,
That, which anon we crave thee to accept,
For though moft weighty be our proffer'd task,
We trust thy goodnefs will not yet refuse,
For we have always found thee foft by nature,
And like the pelican, e'en with thy blood,
Ready to fuccour and relieve.

Vor. Moft gracious foy'reign! to command is
thine,

And as a fubject mine is to obey.

Con. Such was the anfwer we did here expect,
And farther now we fhall explain our meaning;
As frozen age we find doth faft approach,
And ftate affairs lie heavy with ourfelf,
We here to thee half of our pow'r resign,
That thy reward may pace with this thy labour.
To this our propofition what reply?

B

Vor.

Vor. Oh! my most noble, good, and bounteous lord,

These honours are indeed so great, so weighty,
I fear lest like a garment too confin'd,
They awkwardly should press upon the wearer.
Therefore, my gracious lord! let one more worthy,
I do beseech thee, bear them.

Con. Nay! nay! this thy excuse will not suffice us,

E'en here, we do await thy full consent,
And, that we may more speedily conclude,
We do require of thee that thou should'st sign
These papers, by the which thou wilt become
Jointly with ourself, King of this our realm.

Vor. I shall, my lord, obey your high command,
[Signs the paper.

Con. We shall await your coming at our palace.
[Exit Constantius.

Vor. Fortune, I thank thee!

Now is the cup of my ambition full!
And by this rising tempest in my blood
I feel the fast approach of greatness which
E'en like a peasant stoops for my acceptance.
But hold! O conscience, how is it with thee?
Why dost thou pinch me thus, for should I heed
thee,

Then must my work crumble and fall to nought;
Come then thou soft, thou double fac'd deceit!
Come dearest flatt'ry! come direst murder!
Attend me quick, and prompt me to the deed!
What! jointly wear the crown? No! I will all!
And that my purpose may soon find its end,
This, my good King, must I unmannerly
Push from his seat and fill myself the chair;
Welcome then glittering mark of royalty!
And with thy pleasing yet oppressive weight,

Bind

VORTIGERN.

3

Bind fast this firm, and this determin'd brow.
 But ere I do proceed, let caution guide me,
 For though the trunk and body of the tree
 Be thus within my gripe, still do I fear
 Those boughs which stand so near and close allied,
 Which will, ere long, yield seeds for their revenge.
 Then since my soul e'en murder must commit,
 To gratify my thirst for royalty,
 Why should I play the child, or like a niggard,
 By sparing, mar and damn my cause for ever?
 No! as the blow strikes one, all three shall fall!
 Then shall I, giant-like, and void of dread,
 Uprear my royal and encircled brow,
 And in the face of the Omnipotent
 Bid bold defiance.—
 This my determination then shall be,
 And firm as adamant the end I'll see.

SCENE II.

A Chamber in VORTIGERN'S Palace.

Enter EDMUNDA and FLAVIA.

Fla. Dearest mother! why let watery grief
 “ Like a corroding and slow malady
 “ Nip thus the fairest and most beauteous pearl,
 “ That ever art of man by stealth or cunning
 “ Drew from the azure vault of brightest heav'n,
 “ To grace this earth?”—Oh! my beloved mother!
 Turn, turn those tear worn eyes, and let one smile,
 One cheering look of sweet serenity,
 Beam forth to comfort my afflicted soul!

Edm. Oh! heavens! my gentle Flavia! would
 I could!

But this corroding pensive melancholy
 Most venom-like, destroys its nourisher.

B 2

Oh!

Oh! Vortigern, my lov'd, once loving husband,
 Why rend this bursting heart with cold disdain,
 E'en the poor culprit brought before his judge
 May boldly plead his cause; but I alas!
 Most innocent, and ignorant of my fault,
 Must bear the weight of judgment.

Enter PASCENTIUS.

Fla. What news of good import, my dearest
 brother,
 Does this thy eager joy now cloak from us?

Pas. Oh! I have tidings I would fain make
 known,
 But they are of such wond'rous magnitude
 That I can scarcely give them utterance.

Edm. Oh! speak my child! my dear Pascen-
 tius, speak,
 For much thy mother consolation needs.

Pas. The King then, madam, in his royal
 bounty,
 Hath jointly with himself, conferr'd the sway
 Of this our mighty kingdom, on my father.

Edm. Now woe indeed hath made her master-
 piece!
 Ambition thou! thou art mine enemy;
 Thy idle dreams have forc'd my husband from me;
 Thy honey'd visions have depriv'd my soul
 Of that alone which made life worth retaining;
 Yes, thou art now, alas! become a flow'r
 That by the radiance of the sun is parch'd,
 And lacking drops of succour, droops and dies.

*Enter FOOL, whimsically attired, with his Bells
 and Ladle.*

Pas. Whither so fast, good Fool?

Fool.

VORTIGERN.

5

Fool. Good Fool, say'st thou! marry, these are sweet words, that do not often fall to our lot; but let me tell you, good master, fools have excellent wits, and those that ha' none will gladly go flatter, lest the fool's folly should make them still more foolish.

Pas. But, prithee, tell us what is thine affair?

Fool. Oh! my affair is weighty indeed, being burthened with the speech o'royalty.

Pas. And wherefore so?

Fool. I pray you stay your patience but awhile, and I will tell you: thou dost expect nought from the Fool, but folly; but from a king thou wouldst a cunning speech.

Pas. And is't not so?

Fool. Oh! no, by my troth, our good sovereign hath unto my noble master betrayed great lack of policy.

Pas. How so?

Fool. Why your wise man will tell you, the crown doth gall the wearer; but marry! I will shew myself the fool indeed, for I do say the half oft pinches more than the whole.

Pas. Thou wouldst be witty, Fool!

Fool. Marry, say not I would be, but that I am so; for let me tell you, the wit of your Fool is true wit, being solely his own, no man coveting it; whereas that of your wise man comes from books, and from those who went before. But wherefore should I thus lose wind? my wit being folly, is not by your wise man understood; therefore, I'll to the purpose. My master is made half King, and sends me his swift Mercury, to tell your gentle ladyship his honour's pleasure.

Edm. Prithee, be brief, and tell thine errand quickly.

B 3

Fool.

Fool. An please you then, my sweet mistress, he wills that you do put on your best attire, and that you do straight attend him, and go before th'other half o'th' crown.

Edm. We shall be ready at command. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E III.

Another Apartment in VORTIGERN'S Palace.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Thus far, then, have my deeds a sanction found,
 For still each morn doth the resplendant sun
 Dart forth its golden rays, to grace my sight.
 O what an inconsistent thing is man!
 There was a time when e'en the thought of murder
 Would have congeal'd my very mass of blood;
 "And, as a tree, on the approaching storm,
 "E'en so my very frame would shake and tremble:"
 But now I stand not at the act itself,
 Which breaks all bonds of hospitality.—
 To me, the King hath ever been most kind;
 Yea, even lavish of his princely favours,—
 And this his love I do requite with murder!
 And wherefore this? What! for a diadem,
 The which I purchase at no less a cost
 Than even the perdition of my soul;
 Still at that self same price will I obtain it.
 The rooted hate the Britons bear the Scots
 Is unto me an omen most propitious;
 I have dispatch'd my secret emissaries,
 And the young princes sons of the old King,
 (A long time since for study sent to Rome)
 Even for them have I prepared honours:
 For ere the moon shall twice have fill'd her orb,
 Death shall provide for them a crown immortal!

Enter

VORTIGERN.

7

Enter Servant.

Serv. Two officers, my lord ! await your leisure,

Vor. Well, shew them to our presence.

Enter Murderers.

Have ye concluded,
Is your answer ready ?

Murd. We have consider'd all,
And on your promis'd bounty undertake
A speedy execution.

Vor. You are agreed ?

Both. Yes, my good lord.

Vor. Listen then awhile !

This night Constantius gives a feast, at which
He wills I should be present, mark me well,
For I will give the signal, and retire.
Then tarry not, but do it on the instant.

Murd. Fear not, my noble lord, we are resolv'd.

[Exeunt.]

Vor. Now then good King prepare thee for the
worst.

For ere the thick and noisome air of night
Shall with damn'd Hecate's baneful spells be fill'd,
Thou must from hence to the cold bed of death,
To whom alike peasant and king are slaves.
Come then black night, and hood the world in
darkness,

Seal close the hearts of those I have suborn'd,
That pity may not turn them from their purpose.

[Exit.]

B 4

SCENE

SCENE IV.

A Chamber in CONSTANTIUS' Palace.

Enter. CONSTANTIUS with a Groom.

Con. Here place the light, now hasten to the hall,
And unto Vortigern present this ring,
Pledge of my sacred friendship, and alliance,
Tell him I fain would see him in the morning—
Farewel, good Page! I now would be alone.

[Exit Page.]

O sleep, thou nourisher of man and babe,
Soother of every sorrow, that can'st bury
The care-distracted mind in sweet oblivion,
To thee, O gentle pow'r! I pawn my soul!
Here then, on my bended knee, great God,
Let me implore thy grace, and look for mercy;
" Though thou hast plac'd me sovereign over men,
" And on my brow hath fix'd a diadem;
" Yet am I subject still to human frailty,
" And naught can boast more than my meanest
vassal."

How wisely hast thou fram'd thy work of nature,
Even the smallest reptile hath its instinct,
Aye, is as nicely form'd as man, himself.
Both too must die, both rot and come to dust.
Yet man hath one great property besides,
A never fading, an immortal soul!
Upon that thought I rest my happiness.

[Lies on the couch.]

Enter two Murderers.

1st. Mur. " Oh! if one spot did tully his pure
soul
" In heaven hath he wip'd it clean away,
" With

“ With this his sweet unfeigned oraison.

2nd. Mur. “ ’Tis true——

“ The King to us hath ever been most kind,

“ We’ve serv’d and gained honours under him;

“ ’Twould have disgrac’d the name of Murderer

“ Had we to cold death sent him unprepar’d.

“ For e’en the rigid law itself allows

“ To crimes most daring, most atrocious,

“ A time to pray, a time to ask for mercy.

1st. Mur. “ Why how now?

“ Hast thou forgot thine errand,

“ Wast sent here to prate thus,

“ Or to fulfil thy promise?

“ I’ll do’t, nor this thy dagger will I sheath

“ ’Till reaking with his blood.

2nd. Mur. “ Yet one moment I pray thee,

“ comrade!

1st. Mur. “ I tell thee I will not.

“ For as I am a man and soldier,

“ So will I scorn to break my promis’d vow.

1st. Mur. “ Thou shalt not yet,

“ For statue like, here will I fix myself

“ Till thou dost hear me out.

“ Oh! is’t not most manlike, that we stain

“ Our hands with blood that ne’er did us offend?

“ Is’t not most serpent like, to sting sweet sleep,

“ Which even from the giant takes all strength,

“ And makes man taste of that which is to come?

“ Let us, I pray thee friend, turn from the deed!

“ I cannot, dare not, nay! I will not do’t—

2nd. Mur. “ Coward, take hence that poor un-

“ manly carcase,

“ Or this my steel shall work a double end.

1st. Mur. “ Lay on then! for I will defend the

“ King,

“ And

"And may the Gods aid this my good design."

[They fight, first Murderer dies behind the Scenes.]

The King awakes.

Con. "Vassal, I say! what means this bloody deed?"

"This bold intrusion in our royal presence?"

"Can majesty command no more respect,

"But, that our very sleep must be disturb'd

"With murder, rude and most licentious?"

Mur. "Why plainly then! I do not fear thy
"presence,

"And to be brief with thee, thine hour is come!"

King. "Traitor and villain, what would'st thou?"

Mur. "Nay then, an thou dost speak so rudely,

"Take thy reward. *[Stabs him.]*

King. "Oh! I die, sweet Heaven receive my
"foul!"

"Forgive, oh pardon this his crime!"

"I come! bliss! bliss! is my reward for ever.

[Dies.]

Mur. "Farewell, good King! and thou my
"comrade too!"

Now for my fouler purpose, that done!

Hence on time's wing will I to Vortigern,

And this my two edg'd work to him unfold.

[Exit.]

SCENE V.

*Enter VORTIGERN with Guards, as having viewed
the dead body of the King, behind the Scenes.*

Vor. O! this preposterous and inhuman act,
Doth stir up pity in the blackest hell.

Heav'n's

VORTIGERN.

11

Heav'n's aspect did foretell some ill this night,
For each dread shrieking minister of darkness,
Did chatter forth his rude and dismal song,
While bellowing thunder shook the troubled
earth,

“ And the livid, and flaky lightning,
“ Widely burst ope each crack in Heav'n's high
“ portal.”

Have ye the traitor seiz'd? Is he yet dead?

Off. Hard by, my lord, he lies reeking in's blood,
Despair and horror mastered each man's breast;
The attempt to check their rage would have been
useless,

His body is become one gaping wound.

Vor. O! my good friends, wou'd you had spar'd
his life,

And that your zeal had been more temperate,
For by the workings of my soul, I find
This was the instrument, but not the head.

Off. Name him you deem the murderer, good
my lord?

Vor. Be silent and mark well that I shall say,
The Scots you know do bear us enmity,
Many of rank do tarry in our Court;
On them the guilt of this foul murder rests.
I pray you instantly dispatch the guard,
And seize each Scotsman ye shall chance to meet;
I will go summon all the lords to council,
And well consider that 'twere best to do.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

*Assembly of Barons.**Enter VORTIGERN.*

Vor. Oh! my thrice noble and right worthy
Peers,

We are now met upon the heaviest summons
That ever yet did occupy our thoughts;
The sparkling drop which graces every eye,
And fain wou'd deluge every manly cheek,
Denotes the brimful sorrow of each heart;
Pity disgraces not the manlike brow.
And yet it suits but ill the present crisis,
When our best strength and wisdom both are
needful,

To stem this black, this damn'd conspiracy;
For bloody war and foul rebellion lurk
Beneath the mask of cruel treachery,
Which i'th' present is so plainly shewn,
By the brutal deed of these vile Scotsmen!
Then let not drowsy thought deter our purpose,
Nor basely rot in us the plant of justice,
The clamorous people call aloud for sentence,
Should we delay, it will go hard with us.

1st. Bar. Trusting to thee, our noble good Pro-
tector,

We do, without delay, pronounce as guilty,
The perpetrators of this crying deed.
We also do, with general accord,
Beseech you bear the office of a King,
Until the Princes do return from Rome;
For on Aurelius, now the elder son

Of

Of our deceased King the election lights;
 Well do we know how tedious is this task,
 How full of trouble and perplexity!
 But we do also know thee for a man,
 Most good, most perfect, and most merciful!

Vor. I fear good Barons you do flatter me!
 I thought ere this, to have resigned the weight,
 Which the late King had heap'd upon my shoulders;

But mark the sad reverse, for even now,
 You double this my load, and bear me down;
 Oh! you ha' struck me where I am indeed
 Most vulnerable—" *The voice o'th' people!*"
 For them I will surrender liberty.
 Dispatch to Rome the messengers I pray,
 And let Aurelius know, that he is called
 To wear this gold, this forked diadem,
 That gives to man the sway of sovereignty.

2nd. Bar. My lord! the people, Barons, all do
 thank you

For this your kind compliance with their will;
 To morrow's dawn shall see the packets ready,
 And we will then consult what messengers
 Shall to the princes bear, these heavy tidings.

Vor. 'Tis well! I do commend your zealous care;
 And now, good friends, one mournful charge
 remains,

To attend the burial of our murdered King;
 Oh! 'twas a nipping blast, which suddenly
 Bereft us of our first, our sweetest plant,
 Both King and Father it hath stolen from us;

"But wherefore do I strive to ope anew,
 Those gates which bar the course of liquid sorrow?
 No! rather let your big griefs pine unseen,
 Where cold restraint can neither chide nor curb
 ye,"

Farewel! time then be yours until to-morrow.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

*A Hall in VORTIGERN's Palace.**Enter VORTIGERN.*

Vor. How stands it now—then am I but Protector?

Oh! 'tis an attribute my soul abhors,
To sovereignty a pander and a slave,
That looks with wistful eyes upon the crown,
And dares not touch it; O! I will none on't.
Curse on those lords that did award me this,
Whose justice needs must force them keep the
crown

For those, who by descent, do most deserve it.
By heav'ns, I'll pour my bitter vengeance down
For this their slow and niggardly promotion.
Yet as they did award and give me sway
Until the Prince Aurelius should return,
Then is it mine most sure! the Princes cannot
From their cold graves return to take it from me!
Their wish'd-for death is sure, yet do I dread—
For here within, there lurks a messenger
That cautions me, and fain wou'd ha' me fear.
What ho! without I say! who attends there!

Enter Servant.

Vor. Are there no letters yet arrived from Rome?

Serv. No, my good liege.

Vor. Nor messengers?

Serv. Neither, my gracious sir.

Vor. Retire a while. [Exit Servant.

Nor messengers nor letters! this alarms me;
But what care I, e'en let the Princes come,

When

VORTIGERN. 15

When come, there's room enough i'th' ground
for them.

But soft! and let me weigh my present state,
For much I fear these barons proffer'd friendship.

" Their niggard shew of liberality

" Suits ill my lofty aim, and but the semblance
wears

" Of that my soul is thirsting for—Dominion!

" Not rivetted by closer ties their Chief, tho'
friendly,

" May swerve and prove a foe."—

Yet I've a lure that shall ensnare that chief,
My daughter's hand! but if she shou'd refuse,
Then were my purpose baffled, or destroy'd.

Is it not strange, a flinty heart like mine,
Should stagger thus at thinking of a daughter?
Flavia! whose fondest love to young Aurelius,
Now sojourning at Rome, hath long been pledg'd!
Yet what of that! shall she, a whining girl,
Oppose a father's and a monarch's will?
My firm resolve once known, will shake that mind
Which in her gentlest moments nature fram'd;
This work atchiev'd each lord his aid shall lend,
And to my will the haughtiest crest shall bend.

[Exit.

SCENE VIII.

London. The Palace.

Enter FLAVIA and PASCENTIUS.

Fla. Oh! heav'ns! in thy great mercy thou hast
led me

To that dear object I so long have sought
Through ev'ry secret winding o'th' palace.

Pas. My Flavia say!

What

What is't hath ruffled thus thy gentle bosom?
 I fear our father hath occasion'd this,
 For late as passing through the hall I saw him,
 He paced to and fro in great disorder,
 Sometimes in deep thought lost, he'd stop and
 pause,

Then o'er his troubled breast crossing his arms,
 Would utter words, but in a voice so low,
 That they distill'd themselves i'th' gentle air.
 Tho' I did thrice address him, yet he brake
 Abruptly from me, and no answer made.
 I never saw the conflict of his soul
 So plainly in his countenance pourtray'd.

Fla. Alas! 'tis true! I too have seen my father;
 And harshly has he urg'd my breach of vow
 To my Aurelius, and to pledge my love
 To one my soul abhors! say then, my brother,
 Is that kind friendship for my lov'd Aurelius,
 Which first in years of infancy took root,
 Is it yet untainted? Speak truly brother—
 And are thy vows of friendship to thy sister
 Pure and unspotted as the face of heav'n!
 And wilt thou save her?

Paf. 'Tis not in my nature
 To act a treach'rous or ungenerous part!

Fla. Enough, enough, I meant not to offend;
 That I'm about to ask is truly urgent,
 Nor more nor less than our own banishment.

Paf. Th' impending exile is to me most strange,
 But if thy dearest mother thou can't leave,
 Then must it be most pressing; I consent,
 And will not ruffle thee by further question.
 But silence for a while, here comes the Fool,
 Of him some tidings we perchance may hear.

Enter

Enter Fool.

Fla. Speak, Fool, when did'st last see my gentle mother?

Fool. Rather ask, when 'twas that I e'er saw thy father in such sort before; marry, he did never speak so roundly to me. Of old, your Fool did make your sage one tremble, but my foolship hath not found it so. Times must indeed be bad, when fools lack wit to battle wise mens ire; nay, but I have legs, therefore can run; a heart, that's merry, but wou'd be more so, an 'twas drench'd with sack from my ladle; but no matter, that's empty, till you gentles chuse to fill it, then by your leaves we'll walk, and carry our wits where they'll chance meet better fare.

Paf. Nay, nay, come hither Fool, be not too hasty;

This fellow's true and honest, and, dear sister,
Might well our purpose serve, wilt thou consent
That in our service he be bound?

Fla. Of me ask nothing, but pursue that council

Which in thy riper wisdom shall seem meet.

Paf. What's thy purpose, Fool?

Fool. To quit thy father.

Paf. What think'st o'me for a master?

Fool. Nay, o'that I think not, for thou wou'dst joke, but an thou dost, thou hast rare impudence to do't i'th' presence of a fool.

When thy beard is somewhat blacker,
When thy years have made thee riper,
When in thy purse the pounds thou'lt tell,
And for a brothel thou'lt not sell
Thy patrimony, and thy lands,

C

Why

Why marry, an I should then find nought more
suiting, my charity shall bid me follow thee, and
teach thee the ways o'this slippery world.

Fla. O tarry not, for we must hence away;
What hour is it?

Pas. Near five o'th' clock.
Yon brilliant mass o'fire the golden sun,
Hath just saluted with a blushing kiss,
That partner of his bed the vasty sea.

Fool. Yea, and your father wills that you do soon
salute your beds, for he hath order'd that supper
be instantly brought into the hall.

Fla. Good heav'n's! so soon, O my Pascentius,
Each moment lost is an eternity. [Exeunt.

Fool. Nay, then ye are gone and ha left your
poor Fool behind. Methinks I love that young
master; nay, I know not how 'tis, but my legs
wou'd needs go follow him; yet master Fool, is
this wisdom? for they say the legs should ne'er
carry away the brains; yet let me see, cannot I,
in my folly, now form this saying, and turn it to
mine own conceit? I ha hit it; for it matters
not what comes o'my brains, for men say they are
good for naught, but my legs are; therefore, let
the better o'th' two serve as guide for the other.
I'll away then, and follow him. [Exit.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

S C E N E I.

*Rome.**Enter AURELIUS and UTER, CONSTANTIUS' two Brothers.*

Uter. E'EN now in Rome have we for seven
long years
Made this our wearisome and constant sojourn,
I would we were again in Britain.

Aur. Even so good Uter stands it with myself,
Nay, an thou yearn'st to see thy native land,
How is it then with me that there have left
The jewel of my soul, my dearest Flavia!

Uter. Nay, good my brother, patience yet a
little,
All will be well, Flavia doth love you still.

Aur. I cannot, will not bear this absence longer.

Enter Servant.

Serv. A messenger, my lords, attends without
On business of great import.

Aur. Whence comes he?

Serv. From Britain.

Aur. From Britain say'st thou! then admit
him straight. [Exit Serv.

Enter Messenger.

Mes. My gracious lord, are you the eldest son
Of our good King Constantius?

Aur. Even so.

C 2

Mes.

Mef. This packet then, I fear, will news contain
The most afflicting.

AURELIUS reads.

These letters we in haste dispatch'd to tell you,
Of your dear father's death, and to forewarn you
Of your own danger—Murder most foul hath
ta'en him.

Vortigern on the Scots hath laid the murder ;
But under this pretence much lies conceal'd.
Till you arrive, he is to rule deputed :
But as you prize your lives return not yet.

Aur. Oh! horror! horror! my dear father
murder'd!

Uter. By whom? speak Messenger, where, when,
and how?

Mef. The plot, good Princes, hath been deeply
laid.

Aur. This is indeed most foul! say on, my
friend,

Speak quickly, I intreat thee!

Mef. Then thus 'tis—Vortigern hath done the
deed ;

His love of splendour, pomp and sovereignty,
And his great int'rest in the people's minds,
All, all did prompt him to this hellish act.

Aur. Uter, oh heavens! the father of my Flavia!
It is impossible! It cannot be!

Uter. Oh! this indeed is damned treachery.
My dear Aurelius, let not stupor choak
The worthy feeling of a just revenge ;

Courage, Aurelius! courage, my dear brother!

Aur. Speak on, speak on, and end thy sad dis-
course!

Mef. Thy friends in Britain long suspected this,
And to each port did send their trusty spies,

To

To learn what vessels there for Rome were bound,
And haply that which did transport me here,
Was to have brought your executioners.

Aur. Oh! would it had been so. Uter support me!

Uter. Let us retire a while my gentle brother,
Hereafter we will send and question *thee*
On these thy tidings, and their direful cause.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Rome.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, and Messenger.

Aur. Our friends in England then have thought
it fitting,

That on receipt o' these, your woeful letters,
We should with all speed hie us into Scotland?

Mes. E'en so did they instruct for weighty
reasons.

" Know, Vortigern did alway hate the Scots,
" And hath oft times during your father's reign,
" Fram'd laws, most burthensome unto that people.
" But the keen tooth of hatred and revenge,
" With double fury now will shew itself;
" For every noble Scot then found in London,
" Hath suffer'd under this fell tiger's fangs,
" And this to direst rage, hath stirr'd their blood."
Your story told, will raise you aid of thousands,
Three years of plenty have, among the Britons,
Sown seeds of luxury and baneful riot,
Therefore, they're unprepar'd, nor think of war.

Uter. Are vessels ready to convey us thither?

Mes. Yes, my good lord.

Aur. Come, brother, let's away then with all
speed —

But wer't not better that we change these habits?

Mef. No! no, your Roman vestments will disguise you,

And may in Scotland greatly aid your cause.

Aur. Then be it so—farewell to thee, O! Rome;
I ne'er did think that upon quitting thee,
My brimful heart wou'd thus run o'er with sorrow.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A Hall, discovers VORTIGERN, EDMUNDA,
WORTIMER, &c. at Supper.*

Vor. Seek, Wortimer, thy brother and thy sister:

Tell them it suits but ill their present years,
To tarry thus, when summon'd to our presence.

Wort. My gracious father, I obey.

Edm. O! dearest husband, calm thy ruffled soul,
They mean not to offend your grace; perchance
They know not of your wish for their attendance.

Vor. Peace then, and with thy words, whet not
I pray

That wrath, which kindles fore within my breast!
Again, dost hear me, bid thy tongue be silent,
'Twere better else thou did'st retire.

Edm. I go, and though a vulture gnaw my heart,
I'd bear it all with meekness and with patience,
Rather than this my voice shou'd e'er offend thee.

[*Exit.*]

Wort. My gracious Sir, I've search'd the chambers through,
And call'd aloud, but answer had I none,
Save but my own words, return'd upon mine ear,
In airy sound.

Vor.

Vor. What! scorn'd and thus defied, I will not
bear it,
Send for my prating wife, and thou'd I find
That she in any wise did aid their flight,
Let her beware of my revenge.—What ho!

Enter Servant.

Vor. Quick to my wife, and say I'd speak with
her.
As yet from those dull fluggards sent to Rome,
No tidings have I heard. But here she comes.

Enter EDMUNDA.

Edm. What is your pleasure, Sir?

Vor. Where are my recreant son and daughter
gone;
Nay, think not with those eye drops to deceive
me,

Tell me I say, thou know'st full well their flight!

Edm. If in these veins doth run the blood of
life,

Or there be truth on earth, I know not of them.

Vor. Deceive me not I say, thou speak'st most
false,

I know the quality of women's eyes,
That in a breath can weep, can laugh, or frown,
Say not these waters flow for loss o' them;
I know thee well, thou hast conspir'd with them;
'Twere better thou mak'st known their hiding
place.

Edm. O! Sir, these tears do stop my pow'r
o'speech,

Which wou'd again vouch that I uttered.

Vor. It is most false, but look to't, and dost hear me,

Come not athwart me and my purposes,
Lest thou shoud'st add to that fierce hate I bear thee. [*Exit Vor.*]

Edm. And can this be? these ears were sure deceiv'd,

Yet I sleep not, nor is my brain distemper'd,
It was not so, he said not he did hate me;
O! heav'ns, in your great mercy aid me now,
And if your pleasure be not to torment
Man's poor existence in this span of life,
Aid me to bear my weight o'miseries!
Oh! yet again! my son and daughter gone,
And tell not me the cause o'this their flight,
My brain grows hot, I can no longer bear it;
Forbid his presence too! O! I am distracted!
And sleep will quiet me, I'll to the poppy
And with its juices drench these feverous lips!
O! I ha' need of med'cine and of comfort;
Again my wits do wander, I'll retire,
And lest the bleak winds battle with my head,
I'll to my couch and lay me on its pillow.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

A Wood.

*Enter PASCENTIUS, FLAVIA disguised, and
FOOL.*

Pas. Speak, dearest sister, say, how fares it with thee?

For

For those soft limbs were form'd for gentler usage,
But cheer thee up, my Flavia, whilst I'm with
thee,

Thou must not faint, if there be comfort near
I'll seek it, and from out the tiger's jaw
I'll tear thee food, or if the thirsty lion
Should stand betwixt me and the bubbling brook,
This arm shou'd find a passage to his heart.
But an thou need'st nor food, nor element,
Then will I sit and comfort thy sweet tears,
And as the smaller stream doth oft times mingle,
And add its nothingness to the vast sea,
So on thy streaming cheek will I let fall
One pitying tear, one tender drop of sorrow.

Fla. Oh! gentle, excellent, most loving brother,

It is my aching heart which thus o'ercomes me,
Wretch that I am! what hath my mother done,
That lacking pity I could leave her thus,
How can her drooping heart bear this sad shock?
Can her meek soul my father's rage encounter;
No, no, impossible! then am I wretched.
Then O! you righteous and all powerful Judge,
If breath of man, with pure soul offer'd up,
Can touch you, or obtain your gentle hearing,
Behold a maiden for a mother begs,
And on her bended knee fues for protection.
Let some kind angel, minister of mercy,
Pour on her wounded soul the balm of comfort,
And in the place of overwhelming sorrow,
Let the dear plant of smiling joy bud forth;
And shou'd she weep, then may her dewy tears
Be those of tender peace and charity.

Fool. By my troth, mine eyes did never water
so before, sweet mistress, an thou hast charm'd
thy Fool, methinks the choir o'angels needs must
listen

listen to thy pray'r; and yet these underprops
o'mine do sorely ach, and wherefore shou'd they?
for an I do eat, then am I loaded, and do bear it
well, but now that I am empty, these porters
won't carry me, this is strange, and needs more
wisdom to unveil, than lies in my poor foolish
brain.

Fla. Methinks I'd sit and rest me here a-while.

Paf. Then to the shade of yon imperial oak
I'll lead thee, there thou calmly may'st repose;
Our honest knave here, he shall sing the while,
And sooth thy sad and secret melancholy.

Fool. Why, to be brief good master, I needs
wou'd sing, but that gentle lady hath crack'd the
strings o'my voice; an 'twill please you weep,
marry I'll take the loudest pipe, and shou'd I fail
in giving entertainment, why then I'll to Paul's,
and there i'the presence of Bonner, be whipp'd for
a slanderer.

Paf. I pray thee Fool do as I list.

Fool. Now then I'll pipe, but by my troth you
seem sad, and needs will me to sing merrily; well,
an folly will please you, I'll to't straight.

Fool sings.

A Fool must needs be merry,
Lack, lack, and a well a day,
And in his shoes must bury
His sorrow and all his care;
Then is not the Fool's lot hard,
Is not his mind sore treated,
Do not his friends of's poor brains
Make phyfic for their senses?
Then lack, lack and well a day.

But

But in this our world 'tis true,
 Lack, lack and well a day,
 We our old friends change for new,
 When they no longer suit us;
 Then heigh-ho poor dobbins all,
 Be sharp with men I pray you,
 They carry fool's minds indeed,
 Yet are but knaves I tell you.
 Then lack, lack, ah! well a day.

Fla. Good honest Fool, I do sincerely thank thee.

Fool. Nay, nay, say not so, an I had flatter'd, why then perchance I had merited this, but i'faith gentle lady, he that says nought, save the bare truth, doth oft times meet but a bare compliment. But an you do flatter, methinks the compliment will favour more of untruth, than did the flattery, but thus it goes with our slippery world.

Paſ. Who is it comes this way?

Fla. Let us retire,
 Perchance it may be one of our pursuers.

Fool. An thou'lt listen a while to me I'll tell thee thou need'st not fear, 'tis but the Post on's way to your father's palace.

Enter Post.

Paſ. Friend, thou out runnest almost speed itself;
 Whither ar't bound?

Post. I am for London, Sir.

Paſ. Nay stop one moment, I conjure thee stop! Say what these tidings that demand such haste?

Post. That which my packets do contain.

Paſ. An thou will tell me their contents, there's gold.

Fool.

Fool. Now, i'troth, thou'lt unlock letters, packets, and all, look, look, the knave doth handle it with good grace, firrah an thou play'dst on David's harp, thy fingers ne'er wou'd move so glibly o'er the strings, as o'er yon gold, do'st hear me.

Post. Thy gold indeed doth please, it fills my purse,
And though it should not, yet what matters it?
I am well fee'd for telling that alone,
Which every simple peasant soon must know,
Then thus it is; Vortigern is accus'd
Of the base murder of Constantius!

Fla. Heavens!

Post. Yea, and even now the Princes marching
hither
From Scotland, with them bring a numerous
army.

Paf. Alas my father! yet I do beseech thee,
How know they this? Who was't instructed
them?

Post. Swift messengers dispatch'd by friends to
Rome,
Further I know not—therefore must away

[*Exit Post.*]

Fool. Go to, go to, I do believe thee; marry
an thou art humble, thy purse is somewhat prouder.
Good Sir, wer't not best we put on, I am
faint at heart; marry 'tis pity my wits did not fill
their owner, as well as those who do beg them.

Paf. Let's on, and yet what course is't fit we
take?

The night doth throw his footy mantle round,
And robs us of the cheering light of day.

Fla. Oh! Wou'd this night cou'd pluck my
sorrow from me,

Or

Or that the long eternal sleep of death
Wou'd close life's wretched, weary pilgrimage.

Pas. Oh! Sister an thou lov'st me grieve not so.

Fla. If charity be meek, so will I be,
And where thou lead'st, resign'd I'll follow thee.

Fool. Marry, an you'll listen to a fool, perchance
he may for once speak wisely.

Pas. Out with thy council then.

Fool. Thus it is—chance hath made me your
fool, and chance will now that your fool speak
something like wisdom; marry is not this the
road to Scotland? Do'st understand me?

Pas. Truly, I understand thee.

Fool. To't again, what say'st thou o'joining the
young Princes on their march?

Pas. It is most wisely utter'd, my good Fool.
Come gentle sister, we'll to th'skirt o'th' wood,
And find some cottage that may serve to night,
As 'twere a palace—all will yet be well.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE I.

An Assembly of Barons.

Vor. **T**O you have been explained our late
dispatches,

Say, did we not invite these Princes home,
And tender them the crown? Yet we do find
They come with foreign aid and civil war,
To bear the sway and empire over us:
Can any present say why this shou'd be?

1st. Bar. No! they're the sons of our late King,
'tis true,

As such, the elder doth by right inherit
The crown and kingdom, and in their defence,
Our lives, yea, and our very best heart's blood
Were truly offer'd, which we now revoke.
And since they tear the bowels of our land,
And come with blood and naked sword to court us,
We'll to the field, and when bright victory
Hath with the sacred laurel bound our brows,
The Princes' heads in triumph shall be borne
Throughout our ranks; rebellion's just reward!

2nd. Bar. Then are they traitors to their God
and country.

3d. Bar. And as the crown is now untenanted,
'Tis fit the most deserving brow shou'd wear it.

1st. Bar. If any one there be that doth deserve it,
'Tis he that hath it even now in trust.

All. Then be it his!

1st. Bar.

VORTIGERN.

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1st. Bar. Girt tight the drum, and sound yon
brazen trumpet,

Let it proclaim aloud, our firm decree :
Aurelius and his brother both are traitors,
And 'gainst their mother country do rebel.

[*Trumpet sounds.*

2nd. Bar. Nay, stop not there; but let them
bellow on,

'Till with their clamorous noise they shame the
thunder,

And o'er the earth, and e'en to heaven proclaim,
Vortigern our King! our lawful sov'reign.

Vor. The exigencies of the state demand
My quick consent, I therefore give it you.
And when the crown shall on my front be bound,
My faithful soul shall prize the sacred trust,
My arm be nerv'd to fight in its defence.

Barons. All hail great Vortigern of Britain King!

[*Trumpet sounds.*

Vor. My lords, vain compliment would suit
but ill

The present time, I therefore briefly thank you :
But ere we part I fain would crave your hearing.
Our troops have now been long disus'd to war,
Yet do not think I mean their fame to tarnish,
Or on a Briton throw the damned slur
Of shameful cowardice, no, my good lords !
But though their ribs do serve as castle walls,
And fast imprison their strong lion hearts,
Yet e'en the lion, when full gorg'd with food,
Will bask, and tamely lay him down to sleep ;
Then in such sort, hath undisturbed peace,
And want of custom, (nature's substitute,
That changes e'en our very properties)
Softened their manhood. Then 'twere policy
That we should court the Saxons to our aid.

This

This too will in our Britons raise the flame
Of bright and generous emulation.

Say, lords! doth this my proposition please you?

1st. Bar. We do approve, and thank its noble
author.

Vor. You, my good lord, then do I here de-
pute,

Jointly with Catagrine our second born,
That you with speed repair to Saxony;
Our eldest shall at home command the Britons,
Time needs your haste, therefore use no delay,
Your country calls, so look you quick obey.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A distant View of the Sea.

*Enter AURELIUS and UTER, (with the Scottish
army) as just disembarked, habited as Britons.*

Aur. O dearest soil, blest mother earth, hail to
thee!

Fain wou'd my feet play wanton on thy breast,
And skip with joy to tread thee once again.
'Tis not to wound thee that I thus do come
In glitt'ring steel and dire array of war,
But as my right to claim thee for mine own.

Uter. Brother, each lip for thee sends forth a
blessing;

And with the smile that buds on ev'ry face,
Alike expands a ray of happiness.
Never did I before blame nature's work,
But now I fain wou'd quarrel with her hefts,
For that in me, she caus'd a lack of years;

Else

Else had these prayers, these blessings all been mine!

To have a crown and kingdom at command
Is but as dross; but thus to have them come,
Might from their airy beds the angels draw
To taste the joys of this our mortal earth.
Throughout the camp now all is hush'd in silence,
And Morpheus, with his leaden wings outspread,
Hath on each eyelid laid the weight of slumber.

[Exit Uter.]

Aur. Then, as the general, the task is mine
To thank that mighty God whose name alone
Doth carry awe, and strikes the soul with fear.
Here prostrate then I fall before thy face,
And, tho' unworthy of thy mercy, pray;—
If giant form doth more enlarge the mind,
Would that my front did with the mountains vie;
That so my heat amazed brain might work
Thoughts suiting more this vast immensity!
O most expanded, O most fertile mind!
When thou would'st copulate with thoughts like
this,

Thou art mere nothingness; or when the lips
Do pour forth boisterous and high sounding words,
They back again to the poor mortal brain,
And scoff at thy presumption.

“O God! why shou'd I, a mere speck on earth,
“Tear thousands from their wives, children, and
“homes!

“O! wherefore from this transitory sleep,
“That now doth steal from them their inward
“cares,

“Should I send thousands to cold dreary death?

“'Tis true, I am a King, and what of that?

“Is not life dear to them, as 'tis to me?

D

“O!

" O! peasant, envy not the prince's lot;
 " Thy page in life's great book is not foul charg'd,
 " And like to ours besmear'd with dying breaths.
 " O! had I lives myself enough to answer
 " The ravenous and greedy jaws of death,
 " That will on these my friends, my foldiers,
 " Such havoc make, and wanton gluttony!
 " Father of mercy, great God, spare this blood!
 " And if I must alone receive the crown,
 " Bedeck'd with purple gore, I here resign it."

[Exit.

SCENE III.

Gates of London.

*Enter CATAGRINUS, HENGIST and HORSUS, with
Saxon Troops, in grand Procession.*

Cata. Here let us halt, and let the trumpet
sound,

[*Trumpet sounds, Officer appears on the walls.*

Off. Say, be ye friends or foes?

Cata. My father sent us hence to Saxony;
Go, say our embassy is now fulfill'd;

[*Trumpet sounds.*

Yet soft, that sound proclaims his quick approach.

Heng. Throughout the ranks let each man be
prepar'd,
To hail our new ally, King Vortigern.

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

Gates open.

VORTIGERN *appears in Robes of Majesty, followed by the Barons and British Troops.*

CATAGRINUS *kneels to VORTIGERN.*

Vor. Rise, my dear son! thou'rt welcome here again.

And you, brave Saxons, greet we to our land.

Heng. We come, great sir, to fight in thy defence,

And from thy kingdom wipe away rebellion.

Vor. Give me thy hand, brave General, and with it,

Exchange we mutually a soldier's faith.

Here let our British troops in friendship join,

And with the Saxons share our present joy.

[Exeunt.]

S C E N E V.

The Country.

Enter FLAVIA, PASCENTIUS, and FOOL.

Pas. Why sister thus shou'd grief usurp thy cheek?

O mingle not so much of lily die
With thy sweet rosy blood, thou'rt cold as death,
Pine not in silence thus!

Fla. I'll sit me down and court sweet music's aid.

D 2

She

She sings.

She sang while from her eye ran down
The silvery drop of sorrow,
From grief she stole away the crown,
Sweet patience too did borrow.
Pensive she sat while fortune frown'd,
And smiling woo'd sad melancholy.

II.

Keen anguish fain wou'd turn her heart,
And sour her gentle mind;
But charity still kept her part,
And meekness to her soul did bind.
She bow'd content,
Heav'd forth one sigh,
Sang, wept, then turn'd to melancholy.

III.

Careless her locks around her hung,
And strove to catch each dewy tear,
The plaintive bird in pity sung,
And breath'd his sorrow in her ear.
Amaz'd she look'd,
And thank'd his care,
Then sunk once more to melancholy.

Paf. O! why sing thus? thou dost join woe
to woe,
Thy grief methinks demands more cheering notes.
Fla. Oh! brother, this strange frame that keeps
in life,
Is almost sick and weary of its tenant.

Tho'

Tho' short hath been its course, yet fickle fortune

Hath with it wanton made, and blown it
To and fro, a toy for this merc'less world.

Pas. Listen, I pray thee now, to reason's voice;
Were it not strange, if thou alone shou'd'st 'scape
The numerous ills and buffets of the world?

Fool. I'troth, thou hast wisely spoken.

Pas. Dost think so, my good Fool?

Fool. Marry, aye, do I; an I'll tell thee why,
thy speech hath not wearied the Fool, therefore
'tis a wise speech.

Pas. Thou'rt then a judge?

Fool. Aye, and a righteous one too, dost mark
me, 'tis your Fool alone will make a true report.

Pas. I understand thee not.

Fool. The more's the pity. He that doth, or
well speak, or write, will be prais'd by fools
only, for look ye, envy doth sting those that have
knowledge, and makes them fear lest their wise
heads should be outwitted, therefore again, 'tis
your Fool alone that is your upright judge, cause
forsooth, his brains are not in plenty; but those
which he hath are at's own disposal.

Pas. This road methinks shou'd lead us on our
way

To the Prince's camp! Fool, go you on before.

[As they retire, enter Captain and Soldiers.

Capt. Not quite so fast, good master, prithee
halt.

Fla. What, guards! O brother, now we are
undone.

Pas. Be calm, be calm, the troops are not my
father's.

Wil't please you, sir, inform us whence ye came?

Capt. From Scotland, sir.

Fla. Then O good heav'ns protect me!

Paf. And who is your commander?

Capt. One whose merit

Outweighs whatever yet did breathe on earth;
If ye be Britons, as your looks bespeak,
Then shew your wonted quality of justice;
Did ye not 'fore the awful face of Heaven,
Proclaim Constantius as your lawful King,
When on his head was pour'd the sacred oil?

Paf. But he is now no more.

Capt. Yet hath he two sons living,
Whose souls, for purity, I can compare
Unto this bright unspotted canopy.

Paf. Are ye bound towards the camp?

Capt. We are, and if you're upright men and
true,

Thither you'll follow, and there wield the sword
For justice, truth, and your anointed King.
Yet in this hallow'd cause we wou'd not force
you,

But lead into the fold with gentleness,
Each sheep that may unknowingly have strayed,
And broke from out its bounds, and flowery pas-
ture.

Paf. Proceed then, and we'll follow; tell me,
sister,

Doth not your heart beat high?

Fla. Yea, it swells so, this little breast in truth,
Can scarce contain it. —

How shall we bear the meeting?

Fool. I troth, merrily, merrily as I do; 'tis true
I am a Briton, but then am I not a Fool? And
ne'er will I put my folly to the test. Think'st
thou I'll risk my brains for mine anointed King?
Nay,

Nay, nay, in this affair mine heels shall be my guide, and quick teach me the way to run.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E VI.

A Chamber in the Palace.

Enter EDMUNDA, and Attendants.

Edm. I will not to my chamber then I tell ye.

1st. Maid. Beseech you madam to return again, For so did your physician order—

Edm. Come hither pretty maid, look at me well;

Now say, hath he so order'd it, or not?

1st. Maid. Indeed he hath.

Edm. Nay, get thee gone,—a maid, and still so false!

Go to, live I not yet? Am I then call'd?

And hath my sweet-heart death yet fondly clasp'd me;

Say! hath the heavy passing bell yet sounded, And hail'd me to my snug and chilly chamber?

2nd. Maid. Madam, I fear your reason wanders.

Edm. Aye, aye! I understand thee, it is flown; My poor brain, alas! is fore distemper'd.

[*Strikes her forehead.*]

Sweet, sweet, come from yon branch here's food for thee,

My pretty birds come back, I will not harm ye, My bosom as your little nest is warm,

And is as soft, aye, and full of comfort too.
Nay stop! it is too warm, come not! 'twill burn
ye.

2nd. Maid. My tears do flow for her so plentifully,

That I have left in me no power to help her.

Edm. O! you great Gods! why pelt ye thus
my brain,

And with your thunders loud, cause such dire out-
rage

Within this little ball, this, O! this nothing!

Tell me high Heaven, is this your justice?

Did I not nourish them, aye, teach them, love
them?

Yes, little drops, Oh! come, cool my poor face;

Speak! aye, ye come I know to say I did.

Now, please your highness, and what wou'd you
more?

Say, are not here a host of witnesses?

Longer, O let me not detain the Court,

For in such plenty they do now rush forth,

That you, Sir, you who fill yon seat of justice,

Must throw away your gown and swim for life.

1st. Maid. Will't please we lead you in?

Edm. I'gin indeed to think I do need support,
For I am even weaker than a babe.

Hush! hush! come hither both, I'll tell ye some-
thing;

Now then your ears, I'm mad, ha! ha! ha!

Say! is not this Whitsuntide?

2nd. Maid. Aye an't please you madam.

Edm. Then listen.

She sings

Last Whitsunday they brought me
 Roses, and lilies fair,
 Violets too they gave me
 To bind my auburn hair;
 But then my face look'd smiling,
 Cause that my babes were near,
 Now yon stinging nettle bring,
 'Twill better suit this tear.

How like you this?

1st. Maid. Excellently well, madam.

Edm. The time has been! when thus thou might'st
 have said,

What, must these poor eyes never see them
 more?

And have I need of these vile rags; off! off!
 I'll follow thee to th'extreme point o'th' world,
 And naked bear the icy mountains cold,
 And the dread scorches o'that ball of fire
 'Till I have found them i'the antipodes;
 Shou'd I not meet them there, I will rail so!——
 Pardon these starts! in troth I will not harm ye,
 Indeed, indeed, I'm wrong'd! most sadly wrong'd!
 Did these sweet notes then charm ye? then I'll
 die,

For look you, I will then sing sweeter far,
 Than dying swan at ninety and nine years!
 Lack, lack, a day! I'm faint! your arm sweet
 maid.

There is my gage, farewell; good night, sweet!
 good night!—— [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE I.

AURELIUS' Camp.

*Enter AURELIUS, UTER, PASCENTIUS, and
FLAVIA.*

Aur. YOU then escaped disguised in man's
attire?

Fla. 'Tis true I did, but ne'er did rapier yet
Adorn a side less fitting to support it.

Aur. To you Pascentius my best thanks are
due.

Pas. Nay, nay, 'tis little that to me you owe.

Fla. Indeed, but for his aid, I long ere this
Had broke my sacred vow, and wedded death.

Uter. Brother, the enemy is near at hand,
Straight let us forth, and range our troops for
battle.

Aur. Go you before and swift I'll follow.
Now to thy care my dearest friend, I trust
Thy beauteous sister, and my sweetest love.
Should victory proclaim the day our own,
All will be well; but shou'd the loss be ours,
To Heav'ns just guard I must resign you both.
Two trusty servants have I placed without,
Who will conduct you westward of our camp,

If

If we be beaten, thither we'll tetreat:
Haste! fare thee well, sweet love.

Fla. This token let me brace around thine
arm,

Think of me in the field, nor let revenge
Blot from thy gen'rous breast the sense of pity.

Aur. O! cruel fortune, so soon to wrench from
me

This lovely form, to steal this beauteous hand,
And offer to my grasp this weighty steel.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Camp of HENGIST.

Enter HENGIST and HORSUS.

Heng. Have Vortigern's brave sons yet ta'en
their station?

Hor. Yea, to our right the Briton's strength is
form'd.

Heng. Then bid them wait the enemies attack.

[*Exit Hor.*]

Now, O ye Gods! prove but propitious to me,
And yield me but the victory this day:

A mightier force I've summon'd to this island,

And with them my fair daughter will arrive;

If then her beauty catch this vicious King,

E'en as mine own I'll hail this fertile land,

And these brave Britons by my arts and arms,

Bind to a foreign yoke.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

SCENE III.

A Wood.

*Enter Britons and Saxons, they encounter the
Scots, and after a hard contest, the Scots are
defeated.*

Enter AURELIUS and UTER.

Aur. O brother! fortune frowns, the day is
lost.

Uter. But it hath cost them dear!
Rally then our troops, and march them towards the
West. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Another Part of the Field.

Enter FLAVIA and PASCENTIUS.

Pas. Be of good cheer, tho' they have lost the
day,
Yet was the victory most dearly bought,
The Scots too in good order have retir'd.

Enter HORSUS.

Say, what's thy business in this bloody field,
And who's that maid who bears thee company?
It

It should seem that thou hast fought and conquer'd,

And hast in triumph seiz'd on this fair prize.

Pas. I, Sir, am her protector.

Hor. If thou'lt resign her, here is gold for thee.

Pas. Although my peasant habit shews me poor,

Yet covers it a soul that boldly scorns thee ;

I am a Briton, Sir, will that suffice thee ?

Hor. Vile stripling ! dost thou know me ?

Pas. I do not.

Hor. Thou shalt repent this !

Pas. Approach her not, if yet thou lov'st thyself.

Hor. Thy lack of years doth save thee from my wrath,

Thou beardless boy who thus doth ape the man,
Once more I tell thee !——

Fla. O Pascentius, O my brother !

Pas. Fear not, he shall not harm thee gentle Flavia.

(*To Horsus.*) Insolent presumptuous slave ! what would'st thou ?

Hor. I'll make thee dearly answer for thy rashness. [*They fight, and Horsus falls.*]

O I am wounded ! speak, what is thy name ?

But thou art brave, and I forgive thee this.

Good youth approach, I fain would tell thee something,

But O ! I'm faint, death's cold and heavy hand
Doth rest like ice upon my parting soul.

Go to the King I pray thee,

Bid him beware of Hengist.

[*Dies.*]

Pas. I now lament the deed that I have done.

Fla. O sadly doth repentance sit on us.

Pas.

Pas. How soon this lord of the creation dies ;
The errant'st coward now may spurn at him !

Fla. Sure he did make some mention of our
father,
And bade us tell him to beware of Hengist.

Pas. Something methinks he spoke to that effect,
This must our father know. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

A Wood.

Enter HENGIST and Officer.

Heng. Hath Horsus yet been found ?

Off. Thrice hath the field with greatest care
been search'd,
But all in vain.

Heng. Then have I lost my first, my dearest
friend,

If he be slain, by the great Gods I swear,
I will revenge him on these Scottishmen ;
But whither are the Princes now retir'd ?

Off. Towards Badon Hill.

Heng. How fare our troops ?

Off. But ill, nay, very ill.

Heng. Indeed ! and sayest thou so ?

Off. The day was bloody and it cost us dear,
The Scots were firm, and fought us man to man ;
Four thousand lives were lost.

Heng. Good Heav'ns !

Enter another Officer.

What's thy business ?

2nd. Off.

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2nd. Off. Fourteen thousand troops have join'd
our army,
And with them your daughter; but look, she
comes!

Enter ROWENA.

Heng. Welcome Rowena!

(Rowena kneels.)

Row. O! joy once more to see my father's
face.

Heng. Rise, rise my child!

Row. First with my kisses let me 'dew this
hand;

And with these arms embrace my father's neck.

Enter Soldier.

Sold. From London, Vortigern is on his march!
And comes in haste to greet your late success.

Heng. 'Tis well! go straight, put all in readi-
ness.

Retire! I wou'd be private with my daughter.

Off. We obey, my lord. [*Exeunt Officers.*]

Heng. Daughter, thou heard'st but now o'th'
King's approach.

Row. Your Officer so exprefs'd it!

Heng. True! and do'st hear, much rests with
thee to do.

Row. If ought, dear father, my poor services
Can aid thee, but command;—and I'll obey.

Heng. Thus then it is—I shall prepare a feast,
And greet the King with joy and merriment;

Women

Women I know have very many ways,
And subtle traps to catch the hearts of men:
So practice all your arts to win his love.

Row. But shou'd I fail?

Heng. Nay, do not fear it; I do know him
well.

Come to my tent, and there we'll weigh this bu-
siness.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

*A magnificent Feast, VORTIGERN on a Throne,
HENGIST, WORTIMERUS, CATAGRINUS,
Lords and Ladies, with Attendants.*

Vor. To mirth we dedicate this noble feast!
And you brave Hengist we do greet withal.

Heng. O! my most gracious King, I am un-
worthy.

Vor. Thou did'st fight manfully, and bravely
conquer.

Wine there! a health to Hengist! would that
Horsus

Were likewise here!

Lords. The King doth drink.

Heng. Thou sentest for me, noble Sir, to
fight;

I have done nought save that I promised;
Had I play'd other than the soldier's part,
Then had I tarnished the Saxon name.

[*Hengist speaks to one of the Lords aside.*]

Vor. Thou, Hengist, at our hands hast well
deserv'd;

We will consider, and reward thy labours.

Enter

Enter ROWENA.

Ye heavenly powers ! what lovely maid is this,
Whose form might raise the blush in Dian's
cheek ?

Heng. Rowena, Sir, my daughter, and your
slave.

(Rowena kneels.)

Row. All hail, great King !

Vor. O thou most lovely maiden !
Here let me pledge thee in this golden cup.
On its smooth brim I pray thee print a kiss,
That so I may inhale the roseate sweets,
And taste the nectar of those vermil lips.

[Takes the cup and drinks.]

This feat is empty, fair Rowena, take it,
And wou'd it were that which Jove's wife doth
hold !

Cata. It is Edmunda's place, the queen's, our
mother's.

Vor. Peace ! she is unworthy of that station.

Wort. She, Sir, is queen, and tho' she is not
present,
Most righteously the law awards it her.
She that usurps it, breaks that sacred law—

Vor. How, do ye murmur, must I then humble
And stoop the neck to bear my children's yoke ?
Begone, I say, lest that my present wrath
Make me forget the place by blood I hold,
And break the tie 'twixt father and his child.

Wort. We shall retire, my lord !

Vor. Here sit, bright maid, if I presage not
vainly,

E

Thou

Thou shalt, ere long, have right to take this place.

Row. How can I merit love of such a King?
An humble vassal only.

Vor. Thy meekness and fair looks have won my soul,

O! let thy tongue here title me thy lord!

Row. Already, Sir, have I avow'd you King.

Vor. And therefore here I do proclaim thee Queen.

Good Hengist speak! wilt thou consent hereto?

Heng. My lord! that honour is too weighty.

Vor. Then speak, my lords, what say ye to my choice?

True, I am married, and my wife doth live;
Yet none methinks by law can here be bound,
When the dread wrath of Heav'n doth shew itself,
And on his wedded wife doth send down madness.

1st. Lord. Methinks the law shou'd then proclaim it void.

Vor. Be it then void; and here I pledge myself,
To take this lovely maiden to my wife.
To thee, good Hengist, we resign all Kent,
As a sure earnest of our future bounty;
Proclaim it in the camp, and let each man
Receive in largess from our royal coffers,
That massy ore, which long hath lain entomb'd,
And now shall well reward our soldier's toils.

2nd Lord. The law allows not this, it is not justice.

3rd. Lord. That power lies in the Barons, not the King.

Vor. What! dare ye then dispute it?

All but 1st. Lord. We do.

3rd. Lord. And while the pow'r remains that's vested in us,

We

VORTIGERN.

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We ne'er will countenance such vile injustice,
That tramples on our dearest country's rights.

Vor. Take heed, lest you repent this your rash-
ness. [*Exeunt Lords.*]

SCENE *closes*, VORTIGERN *comes forward*.

Vor. O! these vile petty kings do make more
uproar

E'en than above, the thund'ring god himself.
To-morrow be the nuptials then proclaim'd;
And that Guorongus, that proud lord of Kent,
Who boldly in our presence call'd for justice,
His lands, his property, and all his titles,
We do invest in Hengist and his line.

[*Hengist bows.*]

Vor. to Row. Give me thy hand; let us retire,
my Queen! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.

An Anti-Chamber.

Enter WORTIMERUS and CATAGRINUS.

Wort. Shall we in quiet tamely suffer this?
See our most excellent and gentle mother,
In bold defiance of all sacred laws,
So basely treated?

Cata. Do they then think our substance form'd
of flint;
Or that our hearts are adamant itself?
Where is our brother? our dearest sister?

E 2

I fear,

I fear, indeed, they had just cause for flight.

Wort. Let's to the Princes, and our troops will follow.

They like not the rude treatment of these Saxons!

Cata. I do accept thine offer.

Enter Lords.

2nd Lord. Most gentle Princes, whither are ye bound?

Wort. To quit oppression, and to seek for justice.

3rd Lord. Under your banners then we do enlist.

Cata. Speak, what hath now been done that thus ye quit

Your King, your country, and your weighty trust?

2nd Lord. The King, on the pretext of malady, Most basely hath divorc'd your mother from him, And means to take Rowena for his wife.

Wort. Gods!

2nd Lord. And, her proud father, Hengist, to enrich,

He hath despoil'd me of mine heritage,
And from my sweet, my lovely babes cut off
Their rights, and ta'en from me my vast estate.

Wort. Then look you quick repair towards our camp,

Thither in secret we'll convey our mother;
So fare ye well, good lords. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

Enter AURELIUS, UTER, PASCENTIUS, *and*
FLAVIA.

Aur. Though bloody battle calls us forth again,
I'll rather part with life, with all on earth,
Than leave thee, Flavia, unprotected.

Uter. Hengist hath pitch'd on t'other side of
Badon ;
The noise of arms, and distant hum of soldiers,
Bespeak their hasty preparation ;
'Twere best to attack them early in the morn.

Aur. Then be it so.

Pas. And yet I must not 'gainst my father arm !

Fla. Indeed, thou'dst arm against thy sister too ;
Who wou'd protect me then, or calm my fear ;
Who sit and tell me tales of hope ? O ! no one :
It were too much, you cannot, must not leave me.

Enter Officer.

Off. Two sons of Vortigern do crave admittance.

Enter WORTIMERUS *and* CATAGRINUS.

Wort. My brother and my sister here !

Cata. O ! joy unthought of ! Oh ! unlook'd-for
bliss !

Fla. Say ! speak ! how fares it with my gentle
mother ?

E 3

Wort.

Wort. Beseech thee, ask me not of her sad story.

Fla. Sad, say'st thou? Heav'n forefend; she is not dead?

Wort. Calm thyself, dearest sister, she lives still.

Fla. O! where, where, tell me, that with these moist tears

I may rain comfort on her wounded soul.

Wort. Let us retire.

SCENE IX.

Enter the Saxon and British Armies; they fight, and the Saxons are routed.

Enter HENGIST and Officer.

Heng. All, all is lost. Fly, fly, to the king's tent,
Bid him to London speedily repair;
Away, away, tarry not on your life.
A curse upon his sons for quitting us;
Shou'd they but follow up this victory,
My hopes, my every wish, for ever's blasted.

Enter WORTIMERUS.

Heng. Vile traitor both to your liege king and
father,
What blasted fiend, blacker than hell itself,
Cou'd prompt thee to this damned treachery?

Wort. Can'st thou, vile Saxon, thou base braggart, ask it?

'Tis thou, and on thy soul I'll prove it so.

Heng. Ask where's thy queen, and then I'll
answer thee!

Wort.

Wort. Dares thus thy tongue with notes unmannerly
My heart-strings tear asunder? Fiend, have at thee.

[*They fight, Hengist falls.*]

Heng. Thine hand be blasted for this fatal blow.
And must then all my hopes lie buried here?

Wort. Yea, and thou need'st not much of Kent's domain,
A little mole-hill now will serve!

Heng. Yet chance one lives, that may avenge this deed;

'Tis the brave Horsus, 'tis my noble friend.

Wort. He fought his last,—
On him were found the secrets of thy plot :
Wou'dst thou not have enthrall'd my countrymen;
Was not thy daughter to have basely poison'd
Her king, and husband, and then wert not thou
To have seiz'd the crown? O! villain! villain!
traitor!

Heng. Yea, all, had I but liv'd a little longer.
Hell, swallow me not up! nor ope thy jaws
So wide. The fiends do tug and strain my heart-strings,
They burst, they crack—Oh! curs'd ambition!
Oh! —[*Dies.*]

Enter CATAGRINUS.

Cata. All, all is ours, the ranks are broken—
They fly before us, come, let's follow them.
Good heav'ns, who's this?

[*Looking to the body of Hengist.*]

Wort. Hengist himself.

Cata. What, was it thou that this vile monster
fell'd?

Wort. Ay, marry; but he fought indeed like
one
That begg'd a little time to save his soul.

Cata. Our father hath towards London ta'en
his flight,
But yet Rowena is our prisoner.

Wort. That's well indeed! come let us on and
join them, [Exeunt.

S C E N E X.

VORTIGERN'S Palace.

Enter VORTIGERN and 1st. Baron.

1st. Bar. Speed, my most gracious lord, think
on your safety,
They curse your troops, and dreadful is the car-
nage.

Vor. Where are my sons?

1st. Bar. Let not your tongue curse me when I
shall say.

Vor. Speak quick!

1st. Bar. With all their troops they join'd the
enemy,
And took with them their mother.

Enter Officer.

Vor. Well, Sir, and what more tidings do you
bring?

Off. To London's lofty walls they follow'd us.

Vor. I care not an' they follow'd you to hell:
Speak,

Speak, vassal! coward, speak! where is Rowena?

Off. Alas, I fear me, Sir, she's ta'en a prisoner.

Vor. Then all is lost indeed!—Thou sweetest death!

Bury but in this bosom thy fell dart,
And I will bless thee for the gentle deed.

Off. Shall I go forth, my lord, and man the walls?

Vor. Do as thou wilt,——

Good friend, I'd speak with thee.

Off. What, Sir, are your commands?

Vor. Thou art an old and ever faithful servant.

Off. My means have not kept pace with my desires.

Vor. I know thee well! wou'dst thou not serve me, friend?

Off. Aye, my good lord! put me but to the test,

And you shall see me smile at death himself.

Vor. I take thee at thy word; hold here my sword,

And but one friendly office render me;
Flinch not, strike deep and home; here lies my heart.

Off. O! if each drop that were to issue from thee,

Were a most precious jewel, and the whole
Were my reward, by heav'n I wou'd not do't!

Vor. Thou coward, what, afraid? O! shame, fie on't.

Off. Consider, Sir, your Queen yet lives.

Vor. Thou art in the right; to arms then; out,

Bring me my burnished shield, my weighty ax,
And

And man the northern gate, let every bell
Sound forth each brazen note until it rouse
Our tombed fathers from their silent graves,
To come and aid us at this pinch of time.
Ring till the very steeples totter down.
Mark well my orders, he that flinches, dies.
If ought of murmur's heard, choak it with
death.
Away, away, and now for victory.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE I.

Apartment in VORTIGERN'S Palace.

EDMUNDA *on a Couch,*

FLAVIA *and* PASCENTIUS.

Soft Music.

Edm. **I**NDEED, my gentle maid, indeed,
thou'rt kind,

And by those tears that glaze thy lovely eyes,
'Twould seem that truly thou did'st pity me.

Fla. Pity thee, O Gods!

Edm. Nay, wherefore weep ye both,
'Tis long, long since I was thus kindly treated,
Your pardon, but I fear you scoff at me.

Pas. Doth she yet know you?

Fla. Wou'd to Heaven she did.

Edm. And yet there was a maid that once did
love me,

Heigh ho! she went alack! I know not whither,
Thou ne'er did'st see her, else what I shall say
Methinks wou'd make thee vain, but yet indeed,
Thou

Thou seem'st right well to ape her pretty manners.

Fla. This is too much, I cannot bear all this.

Edm. Nay, nay, why shou'd'st thou wail and tremble so?

'Till this I thought that grief was only mine;
It is not fair to rob me of all comfort,
I thought thee honest, but indeed the world
Doth flatter, fawn, and stroke upon the face,
And sadly censure when the back is turn'd.

Paf. O! dearest mother, say, dost thou not know me?

Edm. Aye, aye, right well, thou'rt one by name a man:

Thy form is well enough, and thou may'st pass;
But hast thou a heart for melting pity?

For better be a brute,—

Than lack it under that most godlike form:

And yet I do thee wrong,—for even now

Thou didst add graces to that manly cheek,

With scalding tears! and for whom do you this?

For one that neither asks, nor merits it.

Enter WORTIMERUS and CATAGRINUS.

Wort. How doth she now?

Paf. Alas! she wanders yet, her mind's diseas'd.

Fla. I am that maiden lost, your loving daughter.

Edm. Bring here my glasses, stand before me here!

Now,

Now, now, I'll judge thee well, I'll see this straight,
 And first her look was mild, in this thou'lt do;
 Then she was kind, most excellent, and good,
 Well, and so seemest thou; now for the last,
 O! her heart was,——but thine I cannot see,
 There thou deceivest me, I know thee not.

Yet if thou be my daughter,
 On thy forehead is a mark, ——
 Away then with those locks from off thy front:
 Now, let me look! O! gods, 'tis she, 'tis she.

Pas. She faints, she faints! this shock is too
 afflicting

For her poor shatter'd, and disabled frame.

Fla. O! dearest, kindest, and most gentle mother.

Edm. Indeed, my brain is something cooler now,
 I shou'd know you, Sir, and you too, nay all!
 I'm very faint, alas, this joy o'ercomes me!

Fla. Sweet mother, you need rest, we'll lead you
 in.

Edm. Then be it so, and wilt thou sit and
 watch me?

Fla. Aye, and I'll kneel and pray, and sometimes
 weep.

Edm. Lead then, I'll in to rest, come follow
 me. [Exeunt.

Enter AURELIUS and UTER.

Aur. The breach is made, the southern gate is
 forc'd,

Yet still doth he hold out, and hath ta'en flight
 E'en to the tower, and there he'll wait the siege.

Uter.

Uter. Aurelius, your fair prisoner is no more.

Aur. How say'st thou?

Uter. Rowena hath ta'en poison and is dead.

Aur. Then hath a wicked soul taken its flight
From the most lovely frame that e'er was form'd,
To charm or to deceive. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

Cæsar's Tower.

Enter 1st. Baron and Officer.

Bar. Is the King yet safe?

Off. He is, my lord.

Bar. Are many troops with us?

Off. Two thousand full well arm'd; and braver
men

Ne'er buckled on their limbs the glitt'ring steel.

O! what a fight it was to see the King.

No sooner had he reach'd the bridge, but firm,
And with a voice that wrung each coward heart,
He hail'd them to come on. Here then he stood,

In his right hand griping his massy ax,

Whilst with the left he held the brazen chain,—

Nor did he budge until each hardy soldier
Safely within the walls had entered.

Then waving thrice his cas'd hand in air,

And with a nod that spread pale fear around,

And seem'd to animate his bloody plume,

Triumphantly he bad them all defiance;

Then slowly turning with a horrid frown,

Soldiers,

VORTIGERN. 63

Soldiers, he cry'd, soldiers! break down the
draw-bridge.

Like hail, in flight we pour'd on them our arrows,
Until their blood had stain'd the moat around
us,—

But look, my lord, here comes the King.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Why stand ye here, like fools, catching
the air,

What! think ye this to be your mistress' chamber?

Bar. My gracious Prince, we wait your orders
here.

Vor. Then fight I say.

Go get ye hence.—

Bar. I go.

Vor. No, no, thou must stay here, thou'rt my
sole prop;

I sicken fast, and 'gin again to flag.

Pour forth, I pray thee now, some flatt'ring
words,

For I am weary, and my lamp of life

Doth sadly linger, and wou'd fain go out,

For look you, my poor soul is sore diseas'd.

Bar. Courage, my noble Sir.—

Vor. Time was, alas! I needed not this spur.

But here's a secret, and a stinging thorn,

That wounds my troubled nerves, O! conscience!
conscience!

When thou didst cry, I strove to stop thy mouth,

By boldly thrusting on thee dire ambition,

Then I did think myself indeed a god!

But I was sore deceiv'd, for as I pass'd,

And travers'd in proud triumph the Basse-court,

There

There I saw death clad in most hideous colours,
 A sight it was that did appal my soul,
 Yea, curdled thick this mass of blood within me.
 Full fifty breathless bodies struck my sight,
 And some with gaping mouths did seem to
 mock me,

Whilst others smiling in cold death itself,
 Scoffingly bad me look on that, which soon
 Wou'd wrench from off my brow this sacred
 crown,

And make me too a subject like themselves;
 Subject! to whom? To thee, O sovereign death!
 Who hast for thy domain this world immense;
 Church-yards and charnel-houses are thy haunts,
 And hospitals thy sumptuous palaces,
 And when thou would'st be merry, thou dost
 chuse

The gaudy chamber of a dying King.

O! then thou dost ope wide thy hideous jaws,
 And with rude laughter, and fantastic tricks,
 Thou clap'st thy rattling fingers to thy sides;
 And when this solemn mockery is ended,
 With icy hand thou tak'st him by the feet,
 And upward so, till thou dost reach the heart,
 And wrap him in the cloak of lasting night.

Bar. Let not, my lord! your thoughts sink
 you thus low,

But be advis'd, for should your gallant troops
 Behold you thus, they might fall sick with fear.

Enter an Officer.

Off. My lord! my lord!

Vor. Wherefore dost tremble thus, paper-fac'd
 knave!

What

What news shou'd make thee break thus rudely
in?

Off. Indeed, indeed, I fear to tell you, Sir.

Vor. Speak, vassal, speak! my soul defies thy
tongue.

Off. Your newly married Queen——

Vor. Speak, what of her?

Off. My lord, she hath ta'en poison, and is
dead.

Vor. Nay, shrink not from me now, be not
afraid,

There, lie my sword! and with it all my hopes.

Lord. Yet we may hope——

Vor. O! friend, let not thy tongue delude
with hope,

Too long against the Almighty have I fought.

Hope now is vain—I will not hear of it.

Off. Yet is the breach not made, and we are
strong,

Still we may out, my lord, and beat them off.

Vor. Can wicked souls e'er stand before the just;

Can strength outweigh the mighty hand of God?

No, no, never, never—O! repentance,

Why dost thou linger thus to ask admittance?

Thou com'st, alas! too late, thou'rt stale and
nauseous.

Where, where is now the good old murder'd
King?

In fields of bliss, where guilty souls ne'er come.

Enter another Officer.

2nd. Off. All, all is lost, the post is ta'en by
storm;

The breach is made, they pour in fast upon us.

Vor. If it be so, then will I out and die;

F

Now

Now aid, ye gods! but if ye will not hear,
 E'en then on hell I call again for succour!
 My friends have boldly stemm'd this tide of war,
 And shall I flinch at last and play the woman?
 Let any but Aurelius meet my arm,
 And this my sword shall ope a gate so wide,
 That the imprison'd soul shall take its flight,
 And either seek the murder'd King above,
 Or down and join me in the pit below. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Basse-Court of the Tower.

Enter AURELIUS and UTER.

Uter. Where, brother, are the sons of Vortigern?

Aur. I bade them with their gentle mother stay,
 For much 'twould have offended righteous
 Heav'n,

If 'gainst their father they had join'd with us.
 For here there always is a sacred tie,
 Which suffers not a son's uplifted hand,
 To strike a father, be he ne'er so vile.

Did he not give him birth, and nourish him?
 And when thy direst foe becomes thy slave,
 Say, shouldst thou use revenge? No, rather
 shame him

With pity and all-softening charity;
 Then on a golden bed thou lay'st thy soul,
 And art on earth a blessed angel.

Uter. Brother, I do commend thee for this deed,
 Worthy a Prince, worthy a Briton too.
 But come! now, for this tyrant Vortigern!

Enter

Enter Officer.

Aur. What's the news?

Off. Th' ill fated King doth flee tow'rds Cæsar's
Tow'r,

And half his troops have fall'n into our hands.

Aur. Did ye obey mine orders?

Off. Aye, my good lord, in ev'ry circumstance.

Aur. Then Uter look, you march towards that
same tow'r;

Let me, ye gods! but meet with this vile traitor,
And shou'd his soul not shrink beneath this sword,
Heav'n has no justice. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *the Gate of Cæsar's Tower.*

Enter Lord and Troops.

Lord. In, in, for they do scar our very backs,
And score us cowards in our hasty flight.

Enter VORTIGERN.

Vor. Give me another sword, I have so clogg'd
And badged this with blood, and flipp'ry gore,
That it doth mock my gripe. A sword, I say.

Lord. Here, here, my noble lord!

Vor. As with their bloods I stain'd my reeking
blade,

From summit of the Tow'r the raven croak'd,
Th' heavy-wing'd crow did chatter o'er my head,
And seem'd to bear black laurels for this brow!
Yet did not erst the sun-defying eagle

F 2

O'er

O'er the world-conquering Macedonian hero,
Flutter, and lead his way to victory?
Then from thy jarring throat spit pestilence,—
And bird of hell, I'll take thee for my guide.

Lord. The troops are enter'd,—please you follow them?

Vor. I love not to be shut in walls of flint;
My soul likes better this vast field of air!
Let them come on.

Lord. Consider, my dear lord, think of your safety.

Vor. Must we then die? then wherefore in a door,
And rot with famine and with pale-fac'd hunger?
No, it were better die nobly, full-stomach'd,
Than linger out a six week's tedious siege.—
Do as you list, here firmly will I stand.

Lord. Is it your pleasure they shall then proceed?

Vor. Aye, e'en to it straight.—
Nay stop! why shou'd all these be doom'd to death?
The crime is mine, not theirs.—

Enter AURELIUS.

Aur. Villain and traitor, at thy word I take thee.

Vor. Ah!—thy face the semblance of thy father's bears!

Thine eyes do pierce more than thy steel-clad arm.
Were fifty brave souls in that body cas'd,
Proudly I'd scorn them all, but alas! thy looks—

Aur. Thou perjured wretch! thou most abhorred villain!

Vor. Prate on, prate on; 'tis true I merit this;
But go not yet too far, lest, stripling boy,
You shou'd to indignation raise this blood,

Which

Which thou hast turn'd from out its wonted
course,

And make it fall on thee.

Aur. Alike, I do defy thy rage and thee;
Where is my father!

Vor. Curse upon thee, thou grat'st my soul,
O! if around this tatter'd conscience, e'er
Did cling repentance, I now cast it off.

[They fight and pause.]

Yet stand aloof, and hear me yet a while?

Aur. I will not.

Vor. 'Twere better that thou should'st, left wax-
ing warm

I rise, and pour upon thy uniform'd limbs
That rage which 'gins to swell within my veins,
And lays a double murder on my soul.

Aur. Come on, come on, I say!

[They fight, Vortigern is thrown to the ground.]

Now, tyrant, now, I have thee in my power.

Vor. Dost think I'll blanch my face, and be a
coward?

A lily coward? No! strike then——

I ne'er will ask thy mercy.

Aur. Now, traitor, where's my father?

Vor. Murdered.

Aur. And by whom?

Vor. Is not the crown thine own?

Aur. Aye, and is so by right; then speak, I say.

Vor. I will not, boy, had'st thou ten thousand
voices,

And lungs of brass to give them utterance,
I would not answer ought.

Aur. Then die!

(FLAVIA comes forward.)

Fla. O stop, Aurelius!

He

He is still my father !

Vor. My daughter here ! then curse thy tardy hand,

That lingers so in doing of its office ;
Strike, strike, I do beseech thee, for I'm sick,
And do abhor the very light of Heaven.

Fla. O ! mercy ! on my knees I beg for mercy.

Vor. 'Twas I, 'twas I, this hand thy father murdered.

Aur. And say'st thou this, e'en to my face ?

Vor. Aye, to thy face, and in thy ears I'll din it,

'Till thou for mercy's sake shalt strike the blow,

*Enter WORTIMERUS, CATAGRINUS, Soldiers,
Lords, &c.*

Wort. What ! my father ?

Aur. My Flavia, for thy sake I grant him life.

Vor. In charity then I pray ye bear me hence !

Aur. Aye, lead him towards the Friars.

Vor. Yea, where ye list, but take me from this fight. *[Vor. is led out.]*

Aur. How fares Edmunda ?

Wort. Her mind is somewhat better, yet she's feeble.

Aur. Well ! of your father doth she e'er say ought ?

Wort. Aye, truly, but she haply thinks him dead.

Enter UTER.

Uter. Of all, the King hath truly made confession,

To

VORTIGERN.

71

To you he justly renders up the crown,
And bade me hail you rightful King of Britain.

(*All Kneel.*)

All. Hail to Aurelius,
Lawful King of Britain.

PASCENTIUS *enters.*

Pas. to Aur. Vortigern on thee bestows our sister,
And bade me, in his name, present her hand——

Aur. Which I do kiss, and with the self same
breath,

Do hail her wife, and Britain's lovely Queen.

All. All hail to Flavia, Queen of Britain.

Aur. Much, we confess, we owe to all here present ;

Each distinct service we shall well repay,

As best befits the dignity of our state ;

To-morrow, Lords, we'll meet at Westminster,

For your ripe ages, and experience,

Must teach our young and giddy years the way,

To sow content after these dismal times.

[*Curtain drops.*]

" FOOL *comes forward.* "

" Methinks but now I heard some gentles say,

" Where's master Fool? I'troth he's run away.

" Right! for look you, when there be danger

" near,

" He then most courage hath who most doth fear;

" Besides,

“ Besides, observe, I came not here to fight,
“ Let him that dares, say nay, for I am right ;
“ I will not out and risk a knocking down,
“ For though I like our King, I like my crown ;
“ Besides, there is a time for Fools to play,
“ But then they must have nought, save good to
“ say.

“ Chance you will ask if this be tragedy,
“ We kill indeed, yet still 'tis comedy ;
“ For none save bad do fall, which draws no tear,
“ Nor lets compassion sway your tender ear ;
“ Play ! we'll grant it—the story ye have read,
“ For 'tis well chronicled in Hollinshed ;
“ Give then your plaudits, and when that be
“ done,
“ Your Fool shall bow, and thank ye ev'ry one.”

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

Written by the late ROBERT MERRY, Esq.

Spoken by Mrs. JORDAN.

YE solemn critics ! wheresoe'er you're seated,
To grant a favour may you be entreated ?
For which I'll pay you proper adoration,
And strive to please you—that is my vocation :
Then do not frown, but give due share of praise,
Nor rend from Shakespeare's tomb the sacred bays.
The scatter'd flow'rs ! he left benignly save !
Posthumous flow'rs ! the garland of the grave !
What tho' he liv'd two hundred years ago,
He knew you very well, as I will shew :
His pencil sketch'd you, and that seldom errs ;
You're all, whate'er you think, *his* characters.
How !—do you doubt it ?—cast your eyes around,
In ev'ry corner of this house they're found.
Observe the jolly grazier in the pit,
Why, he is Falstaff, fat, and full of wit ;—
In fun and feasting places his delight,
And with his Dolly emulates the Knight.
Look at that youth, whose countenance of woe
Denotes a tender-hearted Romeo ;

G

He

He only wishes, tho' he dare not speak,
 To be a glove to touch his Juliet's cheek;
 While she, from yonder terrace, smiles serene,
 And longs with him to play the garden scene.
 But O! I tremble now,—there sits a man,
 Rugged and rough, a very Caliban!
 He growls out his displeasure—'tis a shame!
 Do, dear Miranda! make the monster tame.
 And you, my pretty Beatrice, don't fret,
 Your Benedick is fond of a coquette.
 For tho' he vows he'll think no more about you,
 He means to marry—he can't live without you.
 Kind faithful Imogens are here, to charm us,
 Mad Edgars, Ancient Pistols to alarm us,
 And Hotspurs too, who seek the glorious boon;
 "To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd
 moon."

Besides, we have our Touchstones, Shylocks dire,
 Iagos false, and many a shallow Squire.
 Nay, there are ladies, who in their own houses,
 Are Deldemonas, plagu'd with jealous spouses.
 'Tis true, there is some change, I must confess,
 Since Shakespeare's time, at least in point of
 dress.

The ruffs are gone, and the long female waist
 Yields to the Grecian more voluptuous taste;
 While circling braids the copious tresses bind,
 And the bare neck spreads beautiful behind.
 Our senators and peers no longer go
 Like men in armour glitt'ring in a row;

But,

EPILOGUE.

75

But, for the cloak and pointed beard we note
The close-cropt head, and little short great-coat.
Yet is the modern Briton still the same,
Eager to cherish, and averse to blame ;
Foe to deception, ready to defend,
A kind protector and a gen'rous friend.

This Day is Published,

HENRY THE SECOND,

An Historical Drama.

Supposed to be written by the Author

OF

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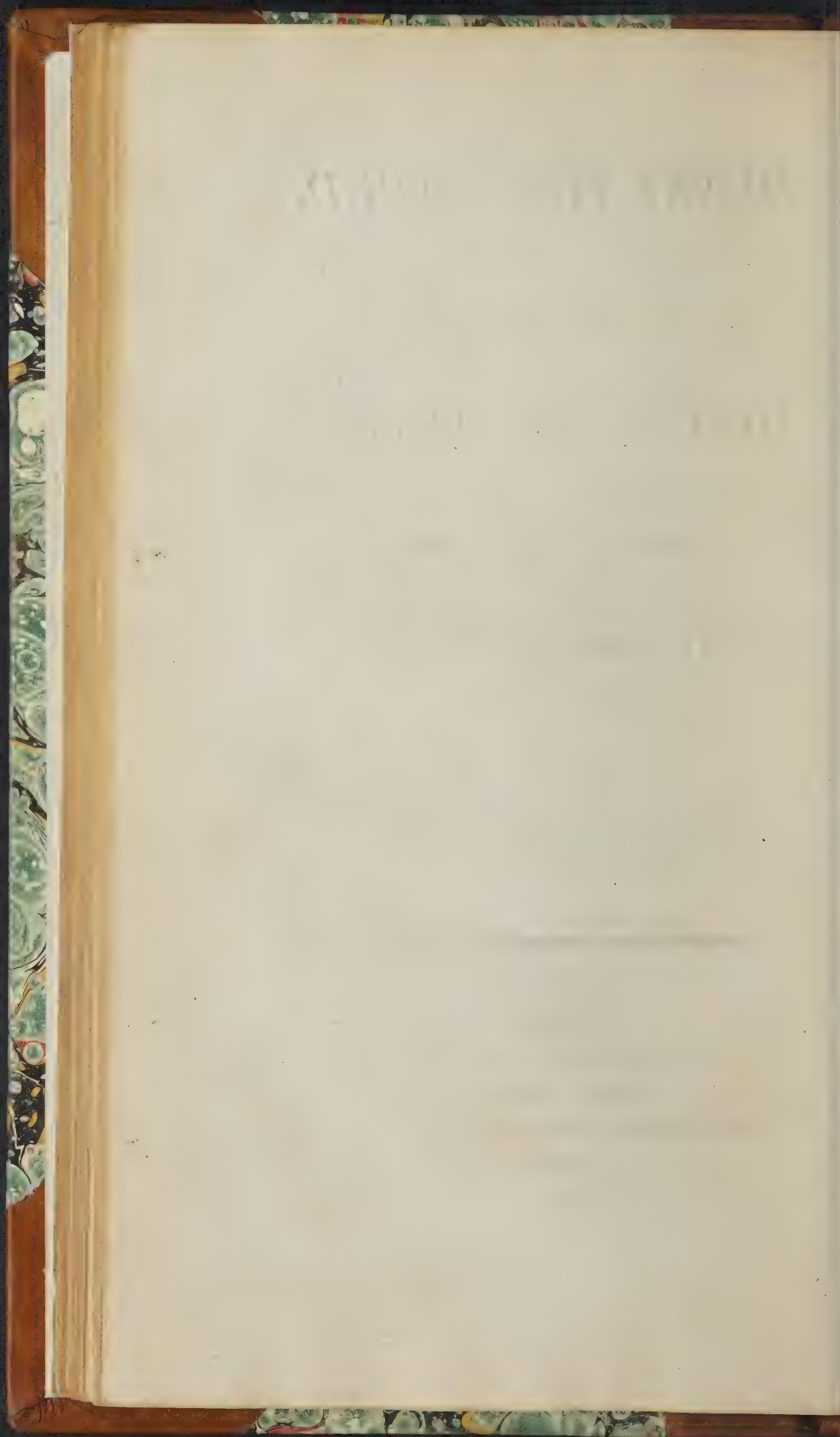
BY THE AUTHOR

O F

VORTIGERN.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. BARKER,
Dramatic Repository,
GREAT RUSSELL-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN.

1799.



Advertisement.

THE Editor of the following sheets feels it a duty incumbent upon him, to lay before the public some particulars relative to the manner in which they came into his possession.

A considerable time after the play of Vortigern was produced, he received from the hands of his son about four hundred lines of this play, in his own hand-writing, and with them a solemn declaration, that they were faithfully copied from ancient and original papers; and that the remainder should be transcribed with all convenient speed. The title and two other leaves only were produced of the old MS. and these were asserted to be all that ever would appear in that state; the gentleman, *i. e.* the supposed original proprietor of the papers, having expressed much dissatisfaction at the objections made by the public to the uncouthness of the orthography.

After frequent and urgent solicitation on the part of the Editor to receive the remainder of the play, and waiting many months, he at length obtained it from his son, with this apology: "that the gentleman who gave them was of a capricious disposition, and would only suffer them to be copied at certain times, when he was in the humour." With these representations, added to the repeated assurances of their being authentic, the Editor was obliged to remain satisfied, nor can he feel himself disposed to give implicit credit to any assertions that have been since made from the same quarter; as they stand in direct opposition to what had been before solemnly stated as fact.

The Editor here thinks it necessary, in order to prove his right in publishing this play, to state the following quotation
a from

from a letter written by his son, dated June 14, 1796, "As
 " you have yet no proof but my parole for the gift of
 " Henry II. I now tell you that I beg your acceptance of
 " the publication of Vortigern, and the whole of the
 " profits of Henry II."

This piece is here given almost verbatim from the MS. which is not divided into Acts, nor in many places is any punctuation attended to. The lines in this play, as well as in Vortigern, are numerated, and in many places erroneously. Of its merits the Editor has never intimated an opinion, but he is encouraged by that of others better enabled to form a judgment, and by their approbation is emboldened to lay it before the public. One circumstance relative to this production he thinks necessary to advert to, as it may possibly at a future day lead to some further knowledge of the true history of this as well as the other papers: Some months after this play was produced, the Editor accidentally met with a passage in the *Biographia Dramatica*, of which the following is an extract: "Henry I. and Henry II. by Wm. Shakespeare and Rob. Davenport. In the books of the Stationers Company, the 9th of Sept. 1653, an entry is made of the above title; but what species of the drama it was, or whether one or two performances, are facts not ascertained. Whatever it might be, it suffered in the general havoc made by Mr. Warburton's servant."

The Editor has examined this entry, which was made by Humphry Moseley, a bookseller of that period, and finds it correctly stated, but with the following additional plays entered by the same person, and on the same day, viz. "The History of Cardenio, by Mr. Fletcher and Shakespeare, and The Merry Devill of Edmonton, by Wm. Shakespeare." On enquiry, he is credibly informed by those who knew Mr. Warburton above-mentioned, that a fire happened at his house in the neighbourhood of Fleet-street, about

about 36 years ago, and destroyed his effects, amongst which were many books and MSS.

When the fact above related was mentioned by the Editor to his son, *he expressed much surprise and satisfaction*; observing that “*he presumed the world would now no longer entertain a doubt of the validity of the papers.*” This circumstance, added to the general appearance on the face of the MSS. of their having been scorched by fire, gave additional weight to their supposed originality, and fuller confidence to the Editor, in his intention of laying these plays before the world. As this is probably the last time he may ever find occasion to address the public on the subject of these mysterious papers, so long a matter of controversy with them, and of unspeakable inconvenience to himself, he thinks it necessary here to declare, that *he has had no intercourse or communication with the cause of all this public and domestic misfortune, for near three years, the period at which the party alluded to quitted his house, except one meeting had at the request and in the presence of Mr. Albany Wallis, of Norfolk-street.*

At this meeting for the first time the party above-mentioned declared himself the author of all the papers, and that he was about publishing the same to the world. Of the truth of this declaration the public will form their opinion; but, let that opinion be what it may, *the Editor here most solemnly reiterates his protestation, that all sources of information that have ever reached him on the subject of these papers, he has unreservedly communicated to the public; of whom he asks that only to which he feels and knows he is justly and honestly entitled, viz. to be considered by them as in honour and honesty utterly incapable, in every character either as associate or principal, of intentional imposture, or of laying before them papers, as genuine, which, whatever they may be, he did not believe to be of that description.*

DRAMATIS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING HENRY THE SECOND.

RICHARD, }
JOHN, } His Sons.
HENRY, }

THOMAS BECKET.

THEOBALD, Archbishop of Canterbury.

LORD DE CLIFFORD.

ROBERT, Earl of Leicester.

HUGH, Earl of Chester.

ROGER MOWBRAY.

JOHN DE SALISBURY.

NICHOLAS BREAKSPEARE.

WILLIAM, King of Scotland.

QUEEN ELEANOR.

ROSAMOND, Daughter to Lord de Clifford.

NURSE to Rosamond.

SIR HUGH MÔRVELE,
SIR REGINALD BERISON,
SIR WILLIAM TRACY,
SIR RICHARD BRYTO, } The 4 Knights who
 flew Becket.

HENRY THE SECOND.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

France.

*The English Camp and a Castle besieged—K. HENRY,
HUGH, EARL OF CHESTER, ROBERT, EARL
OF LEICESTER, and ROGER MOWBRAY—
Soldiers, &c.*

Henry.

SAY noble Chester! have yet mine Heralds
From out their brazen and long neck'd
trumps,
Spoke English thunder to these dastard French,
And hail'd their quick surrender of this fort?
Or will they ruffle Harry's smiling brow,
And by denial dare him to a siege?

Ches. Dread Sir, they here attend your will.

Hen. Then let the English lions roar!

B

Heralds

HENRY THE SECOND.

Heralds sound.

Officer answers from the Castle.

Off. Speak! who are ye that do crave this
parley,
And with such loud and bellowing clangor, 10
Wou'd from death's sleep, awaken us to hear?

Hen. Unfurl my banner! let it wave on high,
That it reflect the bloody colour'd coat
Of England's lions rampant,
Upon yonder meagre looking Frenchman.
'Tis I! Harry bids ye to surrender!

Off. Then let proud Harry know, we'll stand
the siege,
'Fore God we swore allegiance to our King.

Hen. Am not I Plantagenet? son of Maude,
Who daughter was to noble Harry First, 20
And he third Son of Norman William!
Who is't then, will dare usurp my title?

Off. King Lewis of France!

Hen. Then short-mantled Harry bids ye be-
ware!

For as the tigress, when stirr'd from her whelp,
Will piece-meal tear the intruding hunter,
So is't with me, if low'ring on these smiles
Ye rouse the dunny spirit of revenge.

• *A Horn without.*

Whence is that sound?

Leic. 'Tis a messenger my liege,
Who comes in haste with letters to your grace.

Mes-

HENRY THE SECOND.

3

Messenger enters.

Mess. This packet is from Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury. This from your noble peers; and lastly, this from Lady Eleanor your queen.

Hen. Come last, and yet far sweetest of them all.

[*Reads.*

"Though short my letter, yet do I know my
"Harry's love will think it sweeter far, than
"All others—In brief your packets do relate,
"That Stephen hath breathed his last in th' Abbey
"Of Dover—your people all await to hail you
King. 40

"But I the most desire to see thee, for O! my

"Harry, mine is the call of eager love,

Thine ELEANOR."

Thanks!—and yet it boots not that I should
thank.

O! Stephen, living, thou did'st wrong me much,
Usurping both my crown and dignity;
And in the face of God, did'st break that
oath,

Which truly to my mother thou did'st swear:
Yet for all this, do I now pity thee,
For thou stand'st 'fore a great, all-piercing judge!
Whose even hand, the scale of justice bears, 50
Whose all-commanding eye, fathoms the soul,
Searches e'en to the very thought of sin,
And proves himself at once a mighty god,
Wonderful and incomprehensible!
So then by death, I now do gain a crown,
By death must lose it, is't not so good lord?

Leic. Aye, an't please your grace.

B 2

Hen.

Hen. Why look then how this same death doth
scoff us,

Cozening our minds with sweet delusive thoughts,
Binding round our temples, the glitt'ring crown,

6c

Whilst we, (short witted fools) accept the task,
Dream but of smiles, look but for golden joys;
Now mark the chastisement of our conceits,
This regal gem becomes a galling thorn,
Treason, and a whole catalogue of ills,
That are attendant on a kingly state,
Rush in upon our frail bark of nature,
Buffet us to and fro, with the fell blast,
Which like a meagre chatt'ring ague fit,
Turns our stern manhoods into peevish fear, 7c
Sours the full tide of sweet with bitterness,
Till lastly tired with this dalliance,
The wick of life quite dwindled and bewasted,
We lay us down, beg only ground enough
To sink a grave, then groan and welcome death.

Ches. Prithee, my good lord, stand not so pen-
sive,

Hood not thus your face within your mantle,
You speak but of death! whose grinning visage
So oft times you have dared in bloody fight.

Hen. No more, no more, give me your par-
dons, all, 8c

I muse too long——O! Almighty father,
Since your dread pleasure be to crown me king,
I do accept the trust. (*kneels*) But hear my
vow;

Shou'd I, in discharge of this great office,
Either through sickness, age, or foul mouth'd
lie,

Be led from out the right course of justice,

Then

HENRY THE SECOND.

5

Then shall I hope for mercy at your hand ;
But, if willingly I do fail, give me
Judgment, O give me death, less I crave not.

Leic. Wer't not well, my lord, you ship for
England, 90

Stephen hath friends yet left ?

Moz. Yea, truly ! full well we know, how
fickle,

Light and inconstant are the people's loves.

Hen. Well ! be they as they may, I will not
budge,

England shall henceforth be at my command,
Spight of those haughty spirits that will dare
To cross me most in that which is my right ;
And so shall these intruding Frenchmen too,
Ere I go hence.

Ches. Be advis'd my lord, this delay ——— 100

Hen. Sound ! I say, I will nought of council
hear,

What ! have my course obstructed by this mole-
hill,

This petty fort, mann'd with such palsied curs,
Such rav'nous lean back'd hounds, whose looks
disgrace

The jellied prisoner that awaits to hear

The solemn judgment pass'd upon his life ;

I'de not give fifty, fifty ! nay not five

Of these, my sturdy bow-men, for a world

Of such loons. Prithee ! look how they do peep

Like craz'd and blinking owls from out their
nests, 110

Shrinking at sight of the tow'ring eagle.

Draw, archers, draw your arrows to their steels.

Trumpet from the Castle.

Off. What are your offers?

Hen. Ope wide your gates, surrender to our wills,

Therein you'll 'scape the rod of correction.

Off. Sire, we submit, and lay us at your mercy.

Hen. 'Tis well!

For the lion knows where to deal vengeance,
Where to shew his mercy.

Gates open.

Come, Lords! let's in, dispatch our letters
straight,
Then ship for England!

120

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE in London.

A Room.

Enter BECKET.

Beck. Why thus and thus it is, the matter argu'd,

Both parts justly weigh'd and well consider'd,
Judgment too given, with no partial tongue,
Will speak this verdict.—

Happiness with ambition bears no kin,
For thus, content dwells not with ambition,
And he who lacks content, lacks happiness;
This

HENRY THE SECOND. 7

This lab'ring mind then tells me, 'twou'd be
happy,

Yet whispers, I wou'd fain be greater too; 130

Peace! thou vile intruding mafs of folly!

Thou'dst willingly embrace two properties

Who bear fuch hatred and dread enmity,

That soon they'd kindle, blaze and burn thee up;

Of one then make thy choice, more thou can'ft
not;

Give me then greatness—hath not fortune bow'd
Stoop'd, cring'd, yea knelt that I shou'd raise her
up.

For what was Becket, but a poor man's son?

That walks the common vulgar road of life,

Dies, when dead, is lost and quite forgotten. 140

What is Becket now? the friend of Theobald!

Who ranks in station and in dignity,

Next to the King himself, yea, and more too,

For he doth bear the crown of Holy Church,

Is king and lord over the souls of men,

And not of earthly matters, the frail judge.

Enter a Messenger.

Whence come you, Sir?

Mess. From Theobald, who now is on his road
from Canterbury hither. He bad me speed be-
fore, and to yourself deliver this letter. 150

Messenger goes out.

BECKET *reads.*

“*Beck.* As I do tender thee Becket, most dearly,
“and fain wou'd bring thee to quick advancement,
“I do hereby greet thee with the title of ARCH-

B 4

“DEACON

8 HENRY THE SECOND.

"DEACON of MY CHURCH, more shall be thine ere
"long. Thou know'st the King will soon be here,
"and if I can serve thee ought there too, thou
"may'st command me.

Thine THEOBALD."

What! even so, ARCHDEACON of my church,
Aye, and if my senses do not mock me,
More shall be thine ere long, so went the tune,
And in conclusion, "Thou may'st command
"me." 160

Now, Becket, say to thyself, wou'd'st be poor?
Wou'd'st shun ambition, wou'd'st spurn at great-
ness,

No! no! thou'rt an hungred, and I'll feed
thee.

Off then, vile suit! go cover silly knaves,
That know to cringe whene'er the great man
frowns;

Henceforth be thou stubborn, proud and haugh-
ty,

If majesty do frown! knit thou thy brow;
If he do smile, why then, be thou placid;
Yet always, bear in mind thy dignity. 170

But hold! who is't comes hither to lord me?

Brave Harry! proud and haughty too as I,

Noble his spirit, as his mind is great;

Distant to those who most he doth esteem,

Yea, in so much, that no man e'er cou'd say,

I was the friend, the favour'd of my Prince;

If so, Becket, how compass thy great ends?

Shame, thou fickle mind, wilt thou flag at last?

Doth not the seaman, for some hundred marks,

Plough the rude waves, and in a little case, 180

Scarce bigger in compass than a needle's eye

When floating on this wond'rous element,

Doth

HENRY THE SECOND.

9

Doth he not risk both health and life to boot,
 And shall Becket be afraid? fye! shame on't!
 O! attend then each organ of the soul,
 Hear thy stern lord's peremptory decree,
 And on thy coronet grave thou these words:
 If Becket lives, then lives he in greatness;
 If not, why then content, will Becket die,
 Life, sans renown, a thing so lowly is, 190
 That dusky oblivion were sweeter far.

*Enter JOHN DE SALISBURY, afterwards BECKET'S
 Secretary.*

How now, what news, good Salisbury?

Salis. The noble Henry, by express we learn,
 Is landed on the Welch coast.

Beck. So soon?

Salis. Most truly, Sir, and it shou'd seem as if,
 The roaring surge were proud to bear him up,
 Afar the waves came tow'ring towards his ship,
 And dipt his pendant in the wat'ry clouds;
 At length, quite hoarse, they bow'd their stub-
 born backs, 200

Crook'd their pointed tops, then soon dissolving,
 Bath'd and fondled the tough and well ribb'd
 bark,

In plains of milky and thick spangled foam.

The blanket sails swell'd as though they wou'd
 crack

And shiver the twisted cords that held them,
 Both winds and waves in amity were leagu'd,
 And strove who most cou'd aid his homeward
 course.

Beck. Comes he to London?

10 HENRY THE SECOND.

Salis. Aye!

And purposes his coronation straight. 210

Beck. Then Heaven grant, as he is brave and
just,

That in uprightness, he rule his people,
And 'fore all, that he in no wise usurp
The high and sacred rights of holy church!

Salis. Fear him not, Sir.

Beck. But I do fear, and much, let me tell
thee;

Good Salisbury! I have observed thee well,
In fasting, in prayer, and in merriment,
And find thee patient, devout, and sober,
A man, as 'twere, purg'd of earthly sin, 220
Upon whose soul blest virtue stamp'd her seal,
And mark'd it for her own;

One, to whose care, I wou'd intrust the key
That thou might'st read the secrets of my soul,
Prithee to me, bow not obedience!

I am not wont to let my tongue speak praise,
When my whole mind bears it not company.

Salis. So great is the praise. I so unworthy,
That should I strive to answer as I ought,
My simple tongue wou'd mar my wish to thank
you. 230

Beck. Let the desire suffice, then for the act;
Long have I laboured to reward thy truth,
And now that fortune hath advanc'd me high,
And placed her budding branch within my hand,
I will pluck off one tender flow'r or twain
Which nourish'd under my aspiring sun,
Shall bloom and carpet out thy walk of life,
With tiffu'd and thick embroider'd honours.
Henceforth, then be thou Becket's Secretary!
Who now is titled Theobald's Archdeacon. 240

Salis.

HENRY THE SECOND.

11

Salis. How, my good Sir?

Beck. Aye, and hath a voice, will plead in's
behalf,

Prithee, o'erlook this paper!

Salis. In faith, 'tis even so.

Beck. Too long we tarry, come let's away,
And greet the noble Theobald who ere this,
Is safe arriv'd at Westminster.

Scene in Wales.

LORD DE CLIFFORD's Castle.

Enter ROSAMOND with a Book.

Rosa. Wherefore, shou'd I thus read the works
of man?

Is not thy book, O! nature, sweeter far;
Can all the sound and studied argument, 250
Or the high speech of proud philosophy
Raife in this mind such grand, such heav'nly
thoughts,

As the bright East, where the hot blazing sun,
Now mounting upward, 'gins his daily course,
Staining the firmament with crimson hue,
Or wou'd ye blur a thousand, thousand leaves,
You ne'er cou'd speak of beauty half so well
As yonder hyacinth! whose leaf is fring'd
With the big glitt'ring drop of chrystal dew,
That trembles, moistens, and now melts away,
260

Farewel! thou blotted page, I'll read no more.

Enter HENRY and MOWBRAY.

But who comes here, 'twere best I should retire.
Hen.

Hen. Stay! sweetest lady, I conjure thee, stay,
O fly not thus like nimble footed stag!
But chance, thou art some fairy of the morn,
Gathering a Christ thorn, or pretty night shade,
To fill thine evening incantation up.

Rosa. What shou'd I do?

Hen. Mowbray, an thou lov'st me look not on
her, 270
For if thou do'st, thou'lt burn with that same
fire

That I do now. So, prithee leave me straight.

Mow. My gracious Sir, be not over rash.

Hen. Leave me! I charge thee, and quickly
too.

Mow. I must obey——

O grant this morning, which now looks so bright,
Prove not hereafter Harry's blackest night.

Hen. Speak, what art thou? of woman the
most fair.

Rosa. I am daughter, Sir, of Lord de Clif-
ford,
My name is Rosamond. 280

Hen. O, that I cou'd mellow this iron tongue,
And fashion it to music of soft love,
But so it is, from my childhood, upwards,
I have been bred in hoarse and jarring war,
My bud of youth, within a camp was spent;
There have I sat upon a soldier's knee,
Whilst round my neck was twin'd a giant arm
So toughly sat, that one might say, indeed,
The sinews that did work it were of brass;
There 'twas I learnt the soldier's untun'd song,
The morning onset, and the bloody fray. 290
Here

HENRY THE SECOND. 13

Here cours'd the bristly main'd and foaming
steed,

With fire-spitting eye, and trampling hoof !
Upon whose back bestrode an English knight !
Unnumber'd were the youths of France he slew,
Or Bourbon's sons, or Orlean's proud heirs !
How many pedigrees and cotes d'armures
Beneath his mighty arm were blotted out ?
Whilst smoaking from their horses flanks, ran
down

The blood of all their proud nobility. 300

'Then wou'd he tell, how long the fight did last,
From six i'the morn tillevening clocks told eight,
How then they bore from off the blood-stain'd
field,

Their clay-cold fathers, brothers, countrymen ;
Here wou'd they pause awhile,
For memory did whisper pleasures past,
Till I, with childish innocence look'd up
And bad them to go on. But O ! the sight
Turn'd towards Heaven, where their glist'ring
eyes,

Whilst the big tears from off their rugged chins,

Rain'd down upon my young and beardless face ;
I wou'd have chid silence, but cou'd not ;
For if such sturdy hearts as theirs cou'd melt,
Why then methought, there must be cause in-
deed. 310

This lady was my school, thus was I taught,
And if such tales can please thy tender ear,
Rough and unpolish'd, as most true they are,
Behold the man will fit the live-long day,
Of ling'ring sieges, marchings, battles tell,
Where thirsty Mars so glut hath been with blood

320
That

14 HENRY THE SECOND.

That sick'ning appetite yearn'd out.—No more!

Rosa. I pray you, Sir, accept a maiden's thanks;

Your phrase so aptly paints the tale you tell,
It but proclaims you soldier, that you are.

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. My gentle mistress, my sweet lady,
rare news,
Rare news!

Rosa. How Nurse?

Nurse. In sooth, I lack breath, but tell me,
pretty Rose, where hast been sweet-heart? by my
faith, I have sought thee a long hour, O! me.
A man, come away lady, he hath a vile wicked
look withal.

Hen. Truly, Nurse, do'st think so dame?

Nurse. Aye, marry do I, why look ye lady, I'll
be sworn to't then, why his wickedness hangeth
at's eye, as doth the ivy bush at wine seller's
door. O! the rogue.

Rosa. Silence, Nurse, I beseech thee, silence.

Nurse. O! thou mad dancing man, thou
wicked piper, but I will stop thy cheating music,
marry will I. Come lady, you must to your
father straight.

Rosa. Farewel, Sir.

Nurse. Aye, go too, vile man, go mend thy-
self, farewel.

[*Exeunt.*

Hen.

HENRY THE SECOND. 15

Hen. Yet one word more! nay gone! then fare thee well!

Sweet Rose of England, blushing innocence,
Farewel! to Harry's peace alike farewell!
For what avails my crown, or kingly pow'r,
My look majestic, commanding awe,
My ermin'd robe, my sceptre-gripping hand,
My golden throne, my fretted canopy, 350
My pliant court, and all this shew of pomp,
What avail these, when peace, sweet peace is gone?

But now Harry was himself; was a King!
How chang'd his high condition! now a slave!
This England and the million souls therein,
All cou'd this my little brain encompass;
And now the veriest peasant in my land,
Is in his mind, a God compar'd to me;
For I am slave to love, and what is love?
An ever burning and consuming fire, 360
A knawing viper in the heart, a thorn
Upon the nightly pillow—Enemy
To sleep, that under semblance of cold death
Rocks all our cares in soft oblivion.

Enter MOWBRAY.

How is't Mowbray that thus you dare intrude
And rudely break upon our meditations?
Your absence wou'd better have beseem'd you.

Mow. I meant not to offend your grace.

Hen. Why truly Mowbray I believe thee honest!
But well thou know'st how peevish men do grow, 370

When all within is not at ease.

But to thine errand, what wou'd'st thou with us?

Mow.

16 HENRY THE SECOND.

Mow. The Lord de Clifford greets your safe return,

And loyally doth tender you his love ;
He hath moreover pray'd your grace t'accept
His goods and castle to your present use.

Hen. Stands he number'd with those that have
been ours ?

Mow. Yea, for he oppos'd th'ambitious Stephen.

Hen. Why then we do receive his proffer'd love,
And for this night, we title him our host. 380
Tomorrow we must on towards London.

Mow. I shall make known your royal pleasure.

Hen. Why do so—and tell the Earl of Chester
And Lord Robert that I wou'd see them straight.
Look that you also bear them company.

[*Exeunt.*]

A Street in London.

Two Gentlemen meeting.

1st Gent. Wil't please you tell if the King pass
this way.

2nd Gent. In faith, I wou'd instruct kind Sir,
but lack the means—you beg an answer where
I myself wou'd fain have questioned.

1st Gent. Goes he not to Westminster ?

2nd Gent. So I have heard by the way, by one
of Theobald's gentlemen, who further did instruct
me of his coronation.

1st Gent. Will it be long ere that ?

2nd

HENRY THE SECOND. 17

2nd Gent. Tomorrow by twelve o'th' clock.

1st Gent. If report bely him not, he lacks nor wisdom, nor courage.

2nd Gent. Of that methinks the French can give us better account.—

Drums without, and shouting.

So then we have not lost our labour, Sir, the clamorous and o'erjoy'd people give note of his approach.

1st Gent. We will if't please you retire from out the common way and thereby 'scape the croud.

2nd Gent. Most willingly.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter KING HENRY, EARL OF LEICESTER,
MOWBRAY, LORD DE CLIFFORD, Sol-
diers, and People shouting.—*

Peo. Long live King Henry! God save King Henry! long live the King—.

Hen. My friends and citizens! I thank ye all!
Not as a King, but as an Englishman
And brother. We are all children alike, 410
One earth doth nourish us, one only blood
Runs through our veins, animates our bodies;
And is in property so passing rare,
It stamps ye on this earth so many gods!
From every nation; bring me forth one soul,
Place too an Englishman among the rest,
And if he carry not the mark so strong

C

That I do single him, and him alone,
 May I ne'er look for happiness to come.
 My English hearts, my loving countrymen, 420
 When in the fertile plains of Normandy,
 My harrafs'd soldiers have enrounded been,
 With French, that number'd wou'd make five
 times ours,

When this gay glitt'ring troop we had attack'd,
 Routed and broken down; not even then
 Cou'd all my joy for such a victory,
 Give half the pleasure that I now do feel,
 In finding thus my people, at the last,
 True to their God, their country and their King.

Peo. Long live the King! God save the King!
 long live King Henry.

Trumpet sounds.

*Enter QUEEN ELEANOR, with PRINCE RICHARD
 and JOHN her Sons.*

Ele. Where, where is my love? where is my
 Husband?

Hen. Here, my Nell, come to thy Harry's
 arms; [Kisses her.

Do'st love me still, ha'st not forgot me jade?

Ele. In forgetting thee, my Harry, I shou'd
 Forget myself! forget indeed to breathe!
 For thee I live; thou art my dearest half,
 O! how cou'd I bear this life without thee?

Rich. My honour'd father!

John. My long lost parent!

HENRY THE SECOND. 19

Hen. Rise honest Dick, how fares it my good John?

Thy father's blessings light upon ye both:—

[Embraces them.]

Now let's on my Nell, for I lack rest!
And for the morrow's fun that rising will heap
Labours on our head, we'll be prepar'd.
Look Lords, you hold yourselves in readiness,
For 'tis our fix'd intent that we be crown'd
On the morrow, by twelve, at Westminster;
Be this proclaim'd throughout our city!
And see moreover, that every hall
Be stock'd with viands, that so our people
May share with us the joy of such a day.
Thy hand sweet Nell! come! my Sons, let's on.
[Exeunt.]

People shout, Drums beat.

SCENE *Westminster Abbey.*

Enter KING HENRY, QUEEN ELEANOR, PRINCE
RICHARD, PRINCE JOHN, THEOBALD,
LEICESTER, CHESTER, MOWBRAY,
LORD DE CLIFFORD, *Earls, Barons,*
Bishops, Heralds, according
to their Dignities.

Hen. I pray thee, Theobald, is there not a place

Now vacant here, that must ere we proceed
Be fill'd? I mean our seat of Chancellor.

C 2

Thro.

20 HENRY THE SECOND.

Theo. Why truly noble Sir, there is.

Hen. Then mark me, Theobald. Thou art
worn in years,
And cou'd inform us, where to make our choice,
Wil't please ye, do so?

Theo. Humbly I thank your grace, for singling
me

As fitting, now to offer such a man. 460
One Becket I well know, a goodly clerk,
Whom late for sundry virtues he possess'd,
I did advance unto the dignity
Of mine ARCHDEACON.

Hen. 'Tis enough, bring him before us straight!
If thou do'st know him worthy such a place,
We'll not question further, but single him
To fill our empty seat, bring him before us!

Enter BECKET.

Why, truly, he hath a comely figure!—
And likes me well, thy hand my good Becket. 470
Take thou this place, and henceforth know thy-
self
Our just and true appointed Chancellor.

Beck. What gratitude remains in Becket's
breast,
Shall ever toil to prove his earnest love,
And shew him worthy your present bounty.

Hen. Not unto me thy gratitude thou ow'st,
But unto Theobald here, 'tis he alone
Thou ought'st to thank, therefore I charge thee,
friend,
That which to Cæsar 'longs to Cæsar give. 480
If after, thou'd'st please me, I'll tell thee how!

With

HENRY THE SECOND.

21

With justice, and with truth, thine office fill.
Deal with my people as befits a man,
And more I ask not. Now, let us be crown'd.

[They crown him in form, and all the Nobles hail him by the title of Henry II. King of England.]

Hen. My good Archbishop! prithee tell me
now,
Is it ought save form, or must I wear this?

[Holding his finger up to the Crown.]

Theo. 'Tis but the form, my liege, thus being
crown'd,
You may or wear it, or straight pluck it off.
[He takes it off.]

Hen. Then bear it hence!
'Tis not weighty enough for my beaver,
Neither fits it so easy as my cap;
Bring hither my bonnet!

[They bring it, he puts it on, and rises from his seat.]

My gracious lords! had I not wherewith all
To pay in part, the debt I owe you now,
I ne'er cou'd thus have knelt to take a crown,
And kept the blush of shame from off my cheek;
For on my shoulders you have heap'd a debt,
A mighty debt! a crown and kingdom too!
And for the same, thus have I now to offer—500

[They bring two maps.]

This roll doth shew you England as it stood,
When Harry First, my grandfire, reign'd your
King;

C 3

And

And this poor dwindled map, now marks ye out,
How your domains did stand in Stephen's time,
Which now I blush indeed to look upon!
And thus at once do cancel and make void.

[Throws it to the ground.]

In its place I restore again the first,

[Takes it up and lays it down again.]

And add thereto the whole of Picardy,
Anjou, and part of fertile Poictiers! 510
Besides one hundred fourscore thousand marks,
Which we now place within our treasury.

Theo. My tongue alone shall speak your people's
thanks.

Additions such as these do counterpoise
The crown with which you are invested now.

Hen. O wou'd my task were ended here! but
no, —

A judgment must be utter'd ere we part
In words so heavy, and so rude in sound,
As make my very heart indeed to weep.
Now Leicester! bring hither that self same roll,
Which late in France we did think meet to pen.

*[Leicester rises from his seat and delivers it,
then returns to his place again.]*

Though well the seats around us here are fill'd,
Yet some there are that naked do appear,
Lacking their noble owners. Where is't?
What silent all! then by your leaves I'll speak.

[Holds up the Roll which Leicester gives him.]

Herein is catalogued of all our Peers,
The titles and their separate dignities,

Of

HENRY THE SECOND.

23

Of whom the greater part to us seem true ;
Yet damned treason hath been meddling here 530
And smear'd the names of some we tender'd most ;
Where is Earl Ranulph ? where's the Lord Fitz-
Hugh ?

Lord John, Lord Owen, and the Lord Fitz Urse,
Besides some Knights and others of less note,
That should be present ? Why answer they not ?

Theo. We wou'd, but dare not plead in their
behalfs.

Hen. Be it made known, the five we here did
name

Guilty of blackest treason, we pronounce !—
For, that they did 'gainst me their lawful King,

540

With hell-hatch'd treason, wantonly conspire !
Aiding the proud ambitious Stephen !
If one of them within our realm be found,
On him an hundred marks we will bestow,
That, or alive or dead, brings him before us ;
As for the rest, that rather were drawn in,
(For that their betters led them on the way.)
Our gracious pardon unto such we grant !
But we shall tent them close ; if they do flinch,
Why then they look for mercy but in death ! 550
Now let the drum and trumpet speak our joy,
The rest be feasting, mirth and revelry.

*[Takes Eleanor's hand, they retire in the
order in which they entered.]*

C 4

A Chamber

A Chamber.

Enter BECKET alone.

Beck. The child that hath enough, will mowl
for more.

We from the cradle then are still the same,
Eager to climb ambition's golden tree,
Looking but upward to the topmost branch;
Nor thinking once, if back we wou'd return,
That we the boughs have bent, and broken so,
That there is but to go on and gain the point,
Or headlong we must totter down again. 560
How set my robes now I am Chancellor?
Why well! yet some there are that envy me,
And will do much to pluck them from my back!
Am I then firm? is ev'ry bough beneath
Unbent, unbroken? I wou'd they were so!
But I to mine own use have placed monies
That 'long not unto me, but to the King.
That's the branch I so hard have borne upon!
'Tis there! I cannot answer to the charge;
What matters it? I still am with my Prince, 570
The cherish'd and unrival'd favourite!
By holy church, I do defy them all!
And thou intruding Mowbray, have a care!
Busy Lord Clifford, look thou to thyself!
Or at one blow, I will cut short your buds!
Then as the flower that's pluck'd, I'll leave ye
both
To droop and wither, hang your heads and die.

Enter

Enter SALISBURY.

Whence come you Salisbury?

Salis. From Theobald! ———
Whose age and sickness brings him nigh to death!
He fain wou'd on the instant speak with you. 580

Beck. I'll to him straight!
But tell me whither is the King?

Salis. Himself with Mowbray and the Lord de Clifford
Are gone to hunt at Woodstock, as I hear.

Beck. Is not the Queen gone thither too?

Salis. No! my lord.

Beck. Depart so soon, and leave fair Ellen here!
What think'st thou, good Salisbury? Is't not strange?

Salis. It lieth not in me to 'solve the matter!
590

Beck. At leisure, we'll look further into this—
'Tis not meet to tarry now, so follow me!

[*Exeunt.*]

Woodstock

Woodstock Bower.

HENRY and ROSAMOND.

Hen. O, wherefore love, do'st change complexion thus?

I charge thee, I do beseech thee, fear not!
Wer't not that thine eyes are two lustrous stars,
And pierce the knotted bow'rs that enround thee,
Wer't not for those lips breathing perfumes so
sweet,

That men will haunt around this spot to know
Whence such things come, O! wer't not for all
these, 600

I'd tell thee love, and truly too, thou'rt safe!
And secret from the piercing eye of man.

Rosa. Indeed it were too soon to leave your
Queen!

Your absence will engender in her mind
Some dark suspicion, which may ripen straight,
And bring forth jealousy, despair and rage!
Let not thus your heated blood o'ercome you!
Be rul'd! 'twere better so for both of us.
I will be thy jailor, love! and bind thee 610
With softest flow'rs, feed thee with my kisses!
So thou wilt be rul'd by me, my Harry!

Hen. Wou'd I were a God!
That yielding, I might honour more my chains!
I am content, do with me as thou wilt.

A Horn

A Horn sounds without.

That is the signal——'tis Mowbray comes !

Enter MOWBRAY.

Well, Mowbray ! what news ?

Mow. A messenger from Becket is arriv'd !
Who brings sad tidings o'th' good old Theobald.

Hen. Alas ! what of him ? 620

Mow. 'Tis thought, my liege, he'll not live
out the day.

Hen. My good old Friend ! my honest Coun-
fellow,

Must I now lose thee ? must we part so soon ?
To horse then Mowbray ! I'll follow thee.

[Mowbray goes out.]

Adieu, my love ! farewell my Rosamond !

[Kisses her.]

Rosa. That kiss was thine, my Harry, and so
sweet
It seem'd, as it wou'd challenge one of mine !

Hen. Then give it love !

[She kisses him.]

Rosa. Thine ! will I keep so close within my
lips,
A zephyr shall not dare intrude upon't ! 630
When thou return'st, I'll give it back again.

Hen.

Hen. Farewell! adieu!

[*Exit.*

A Chamber.

THEOBALD on a Bed sleeping.—BECKET seated by him.

Beck. The dying man, that can thus sweetly
sleep,
Must wear a soul within this outward flesh,
That knows no sin—how gently heaves his breast,
All cover'd with the silky snow-white beard;
He smiles as if an angel kiss'd his lips,
And whisper'd him of joys that were to come!
Sweet soul! thou hast an everlasting seat,
A throne in Heav'n above. Cou'd men but
look,
And see a sight like this, they were all blest!
Sin wou'd grow out of date, wou'd be forgot!

Enter HENRY.

Hen. How does the good old man?

BECKET rises.

Beck. He sleeps my liege!

Hen. And looks as sweet as any new-born
babe!

[*Henry sits in Becket's place.*

Methinks

Methinks the register of men's bad acts
 Bears not one stain from any deed of thine ;
 And if it did, thou hast been penitent,
 And dropp'd so many tears for the offence,
 That clean the blot is wash'd away ; O ! joy,
 To find that virtue hath so much reward,
 As thus to smile even on death himself ;
 That angel, who ranks first in Heav'n above,
 Can only tell thy happiness to come ;
 For such a place it is that thou must fill.
 Soft ! he moves, my good old heart, how fares
 it ?

Theo. What ! my King, my sovereign here ; I
 am Sir,

As one that from a gentle sleep awakes 660
 To bid farewell to those on earth he loves ;
 And lay his soul upon the lap of peace,
 Until 'tis nurs'd into eternal bliss.
 To you, I have a faithful servant been,
 And toil'd these many years ; but now 'tis past,
 If ought I at your hands have merited,
 I fain wou'd crave a boon, ere I go hence.

Hen. Thou hast it. Tell it I beseech thee.

Theo. Invest good Becket, with those dignities
 That straight I shall give up unto your Grace. 670

Hen. By holy thorn ! I swear it shall be done.

Theo. Approach me, Becket. I have been thy
 friend !

Then take a friend's last council—There's thy
 King !

Above him sits enthron'd a greater still ;
 Whilst on this earth thou can'st thy Prince obey,
 And charge thy inward conscience with no sin,

Do

30 HENRY THE SECOND.

Do it I charge thee; he will esteem thee for't,
Men will bless thee for't, God will save thee
for't,

Thus have I done.—But, oh! beware of pride,
For thou wast nothing, art grown into pow'r.
If thou dost find ambition stir within, 680
Look back to what thou wast, and be content;
Remember this, and then thou art most happy.

Beck. I shall Sir.

Theo. I wou'd my liege, a little more with you,
But no! I cannot—O! Heav'n! Heaven!

[*Dies.*

Hen. Yet stay awhile—'Tis done—all's over.
This body late possess'd with faculties,
How motionless! those lips that mov'd but now,
To utter music such as angels do,
Quite still! one little sigh bore hence his soul 690
Into the highest heav'n!—Come sorrow!
For as I press this hand, my tears shall flow,
Bearing like company with my kisses.

Beck. Adieu; my friend! my Theobald!

The King rises from the Bed.

Hen. The care of his interment shall be thine!
As owing most thou best can'st honour him.

Beck. I shall see it done my liege.

Hen. Follow me now, for I wou'd speak with
thee.

Looking back to the Bed.

Farewel, my Theobald! farewel for ever.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter

HENRY THE SECOND. 31

Enter QUEEN ELEANOR.

Ele. Is't that my looks are channel'd with old
age,
My body crook'd, or that my mind's grown
sour?
Am I Queen Ellen, Harry's lawful wife?
Why yes! and yet it should seem 'twere not so,
Where lies my offence? am I barren? No.—
Have I then borne but women children? Yes!
Men I have brought forth! what wills he more?
Wherefore shou'd he thus leave me, I know not;
And in sooth I must sit calmly down
And weep his absence; were this the woman?
No; I'll chace him home, by Heav'n I will.

Enter PRINCE RICHARD.

Well, my Richard, where hast been my son?

Rich. I parted now with John de Salisbury,
Who did instruct me of sad tidings.

Ele. What sayest thou?

Rich. Theobald, that good old man, alas!
is dead.

Ele. Then peace to his departed soul.

Enter

Enter PRINCE JOHN.

John. I will not speak of what thou know'st already.

Ele. I from thy brother heard the heavy news !
But tell me who dost think will fill his place ?

Rich. Our chancellor the goodly Becket.

John. So have I heard, by desire of Theobald,
Who dying did request it of our father. 720

Ele. Thy father, sayd'st thou ?

John. Yes.

Ele. Hath he then been to London ?

John. Aye, and is ere this at Woodstock.

Ele. Leave me awhile ! —

[Exeunt the Princes.]

What ! hither come ; return'd too, and not see me !

For dying Theobald thou cou'd'st quit thy sport,
And leave the chase ; but for me ! 'twere too much !

O ! 'tis some other pastime takes thee hence,
But it shall cost thee dear ! By Heav'ns ! it shall,
I am a woman ! have a woman's mind ! 730

Tenderly can love, can hate, and revenge,
And will do so, cost what it may —

Now let me see, what it were best to do !

Becket ! in this methinks, might serve me well !

I can my sons command, I Lord Leicester too !

And have a voice, which can in France do much !

I will about it, and raise such a storm,

Will need a greater still, than he, to quell.

Enter

Enter JOHN DE SALISBURY.

Speak ! art thou not Salisbury, Becket's friend ?

Salis. Yes, an' please your highness. 740

Ele. Then tell me, where is he ?

Salis. With Theobald who lays now at Westminster.

Ele. 'Tis well, I will unto him there.

[Exit Queen.]

Salis. How wrapt she seem'd in thought ! what can it mean ?——

And said that she wou'd unto Becket straight !

'Tis jealousy, that stirs within her breast.

Alas ! poor Queen ! indeed, I pity thee !

And thou too Becket, my good lord and master,
For thee I fear, for thee in silence weep ;

Thou'rt but a man, art frail, hast many faults ;

Cou'd I but lull the busy thought within,

Or stop these words that play upon my tongue,

Still crying out——

Thy fortunes Becket, will prove thy ruin.

Cou'd I do this, I then were happy ; but no !

Awake, or in my dreams 'tis still the same ;

There's something more in this than phantasy ;

Yes ! 'tis curst pride, that will undo thee !

I know thee but too well ; thou hast a mind

Wou'd lord a world, and think that world too
small : 760

Will Harry bear all this ? Impossible !

D

The

34 HENRY THE SECOND.

The whole sum'd up, brings it to this at last ;
Becket must fall ! but he will greatly fall —
I'll labour to stop this, tho' much I dread
My labours will both vain and fruitless prove.

[Exit.

A Chamber.

On a Table many Papers.

BECKET.

Chancellor ! Archbishop !—but one step more,—
Rome's holy crown ! and then I am content.
That is my aim—That's the throne I'd fill !
More I cannot ! less I would not stoop to.
Now for the means—Will gold do this ? why aye ;

770
And what will gold not do ? Do'st want a friend ?
Gold will buy thee one ! Do'st lack esteem ?
Lend but thine ore to all, and thou wilt gain it.
Would'st cut thy neighbour's throat ? gold will
do that ;

Would'st drink, wou'd'st game, wou'd'st wench,
'twill do all these,

Nay and much more too—then it shall serve me,
As it hath done others, and make me soon,
That which on earth I seek—No less than Pope.
These letters to my secret friends in Rome
Shall be dispatch'd and with them as much coin,

780
Besides

HENRY THE SECOND.

35

Besides good items of what more will follow,
As shall make them most excellent miners.
But hold! here comes the Queen.

Enter ELEANOR.

Ele. How fares our good Archbishop.

Beck. A little sad, or so! an't please your Grace.
For that I have for ever lost my friend!

Ele. Griev'st thou for thy friend! what then
shou'd I do?

Losing at once a King, a friend, a husband?
Tell me, thou holy man, is it a sin
To rave, to curse and seek revenge for this!

Beck. Lady, this thou shou'd'st bear and be
content.

Wou'd'st thou to quench thy thirst, drink of the
sea?

Or would'st fuel add to quench the fire?
'Twere better thou did'st so! than comfort me
With words so tame! I will not heed thy coun-
cil!

Beck. Beseech you, hear me madam!

Ele. Instruct me to raise hell, I'll listen then!
Or tell me tales of those that have been wrong'd,
And for a term of years have borne it here!

[*Pointing to her heart.*

Feeding the mind with thoughts of sweet revenge!
Do this, and I will swallow up thy words,
As greedily as wolf his panting prey.

D 2

Beck.

Beck. I know thee wrong'd, and know how hard
it is

To bear such wrongs, and bid the mind be still!
Yet be not over rash my gentle Queen!
For though revenge be sweet, still there is yet,
A sting more poignant far,—Silent contempt!

Ele. But that I cannot put on! for my heart
Wou'd burst, were I to suffer such neglect, 810
And not proclaim it to mens ears, with voice
Of thunder's self, that all at once cries out,
Revenge and justice!

Whatsoe'er thou wou'd'st, I'll do it for thee;
So thou'lt but walk with me in this affair.
But now thou art in dignity so high,
With me it rests not to aid thee further!

Beck. Hold, madam! you can still do much!

Ele. 'Tis then with thee to ask, and I shall
grant! 820

Speak! say what is't!

Beck. Say! wou'd your highness condescend to
write——

Ele. I will do any thing.

Beck. Thus then it is;—I wou'd make friends
at Rome,

And if your Grace, by letters from your hand,
Wou'd deign speak well of me, it might do
much,

In clearing of the way for my succession.

Ele. I understand thee well!—It shall be done.

Beck. Then I am thine, and bound in honour
to you!

Ele. Richard and John my sons, are both with
us!

HENRY THE SECOND.

37

The Irish to our aid will be prepar'd ;
 France too, I warrant me, shall not be still ;
 Upon the weakness of our sex the King relies.
 But I shall teach him what a woman is,
 When slighted in her love ! Becket, farewell !
 We shall meet again ere long.——

[Goes out.]

Beck. What have I said ? stay madam ! nay,
 she's gone !——

Am I not leagu'd to stir rebellion ?
 Monstrous ! to what hath my ambition led me ?
 Why Theobald, grins thy spirit at me thus ? 840
 Look not so ghastly, O ! thou good old man !
 Prate not thy dying lesson in mine ears,
 Left swift as thunderbolt it strike me dead !
 Whither is Theobald flown ? e'en up to Heaven !
 Could he but look down, ere that life's heat hath
 Left his body cold, and see his councils
 Trodden under foot, contemned, despised.
 That thought it is, doth set my brain quite mad !

Enter SALISBURY.

BECKET *starts.*

What art thou ? Heav'ns how I do tremble !
 'Tis but good John, my worthy Salisbury !

Salis. How fares it Sir ?

Beck. Why well, very well !

Salis. Nay say not so, my lord, your looks are
 pale,

At your eyes portal stands a wav'ring tear,

D 3

Wou'd

Wou'd fain burft forth! —

But your great foul wills it not—O! ſpeak Sir!

Beck. Thou art truth, thou art honeſty itſelf!
Get thee away, thou muſt not reſt with me.

Salis. If, as you ſay, I am true and honeſt, 860
Then why bereave me of both theſe virtues?

Beck. Speak thy meaning, I underſtand thee
not!

Salis. As owing you my fortune and my means,
I in return owe truth and honeſty!

Were I to leave you, then ſhou'd I loſe both.

Beck. Thou quite unman'ſt me!—How I do
play the fool!

[*Becket weeps.*
Tell me where's that Breakſpeare of whom thou
ſpok'ſt?

Salis. He waits your pleaſure!

Beck. Call him hither.

Enter BREAKSPEARE.

From John de Salisbury I have heard of thee!
Much haſt thou wrote, and art a learned clerk!
Wou'd'ſt enter into my ſervice?

Break. My lord, moſt willingly! and ſhall be
proud,

In obeying one ſo goodly as yourſelf.

Beck. Wou'd'ſt thou bear letters from me hence
to Rome?

Break. That were a taſk I doubly ſhou'd deſire,
Firſt, as in doing it, I ſerve your grace;
And ſecondly, that I wou'd journey thither!

Beck.

HENRY THE SECOND. 39

Beck. Go then, prepare thyself, and on the
morrow

The packets shall be ready, fare thee well!

Break. My lord, I humbly take my leave.

Woodstock.

A Room in the Palace.

MOWBRAY and CLIFFORD meeting.

Cliff. Good morrow, to thee,
What think'st thou Mowbray, mounts not
Becket well?

Mow. Aye, marry!
As from blind fortune he wou'd pluck the crown,
And leave her nothing further to bestow.

Cliff. Indeed; he has all he can aspire to!

Mow. Nay, believe it not.

Cliff. Is't possible, he will desire more?

Mow. Aye! and like the greedy dog i'th' fable,
May lose the substance, catching at the shade.

880

Thought cannot reach at what he wou'd aspire.

Cliff. Nothing less than e'en the crown itself!
For being Chancellor and Archbishop,
He occupies at once two dignities;
Bear hard upon the very rank of king!

Mow. Wou'd'st thou believe't, he'd fain be
POPE OF ROME!

D 4

Cliff.

Cliff. I scarce can think it, where did'st hear this?

Mow. That have I learned, and still much more;

When Chancellor, the king did lend him monies,

Of which he yet hath render'd no account, 890

And now to gain him voices for the popedom,

He hath been lavish of the public stock,

And this to Henry shall I soon unfold.

Cliff. Do't then, with speed, I pray thee, for ere long,

The king intends to hold a parliament,

In the which he will propose fundry laws,

Appertaining much unto the clergy.

Becket to these, I know will ne'er agree;

'Tis then the King may tax him with these frauds,

He can, nor answer, nor resist the charge, 900

Which will in Harry much displeasure raise,

And in the end, may prove his overthrow.

Mow. It is well thought! thy counsel I shall follow.

Where is the king?

Cliff. With Rosamond, my daughter, at the bower!

Hither he will return, ere night advance.

Mow. Wil't to my chamber? let us there confer,

That we the better may secure our purpose.

Cliff. Aye, prithee let's away!

*The Bower.*HENRY and ROSAMOND *sitting.*

Hen. As the fond mother bending o'er her
child, 910
Longing doth sit, and wish to kiss its lips,
Yet dares not wake it from all gentle sleep : —
Or, as the drowsy soldier on the watch,
Hearing some distant buz, doth list'ning stand,
Fast rivetting his eyes upon the spot,
From whence such noise proceeds, I, even so
Can sit and look on thee, my fairest Rose,
Striving in vain to number o'er thy charms;
And when my task I think well nigh compleat,
One smile doth add so many beauties more 920
That I my labour must begin anew.

Rosa. And for thy pains, sweet love! I kiss thy
lips,
Hang round thy neck, tell thee how Venus lov'd,
And yet ne'er lov'd so true as I do thee.
Sweet nature! was to thee most bountiful,
Not framing thee alone a perfect man,
But stealing the quintessence of each virtue,
That she might make thee keeper of them all!
Yes! to men's eyes thou art a lovely casket,
But cou'd they view the store that is within, 930
Thine outward form wou'd then appear a blot;
For courage, wisdom, charity are thine!
And when thou did'st first see thy Rosamond,
Love pluck'd his burning heart from out his
breast,

Cleft

Cleft it in twain, then gave to each of us,
An equal share ! Was it not so, my Harry ?

Hen. Yes, sweet love ! but Venus too was
busy,
And whilst she did bedeck thee with her charms,
Was pleas'd so with the work, that she ne'er
thought

How she herself had stripp'd, giving thee all ! 94^o
As I kiss thee, methinks sweet love himself
Sits on thy front, and waves thy silv'ry hair !
As jealous he wou'd keep me from the theft,
Yet he ne'er thinks how ev'ry gentle touch,
From these his silken whips, make it more sweet ;
For gliding o'er my lips, they do distil
Thick golden odours to the taste, as sweet,
As sleepy dove's eye to the love sick heart.

Rosa. Then with mine hair I'll weave thee such
an heart 95^o
Which thou shalt carry in thy bosom sweet.
As a true token of thy Rosamond's.

[*Distant sound of an horn.*]

Hen. But soft ! the distant horn doth chide
For this my too long absence ! I must away,
And thereby stop suspicion : farewell, love !

[*Kisses her.*]

Rosa. Nay, Harry, I must with thee, through
the bower,
And when we part, these eyes shall follow love, 96^o
And mock themselves with airy sight of thee ;
Returning, I will stop and say, 'twas here

I hung

HENRY THE SECOND. 43

I hung upon his robe ! 'twas here I kiss'd him !
Then anxious wait my love's, my lord's return.

Woodstock Palace.

Enter HENRY and MOWBRAY.

Hen. Now we're alone, what wou'd'st thou with us ?

Mow. 'Tis touching Becket, Sir, that I wou'd speak !

Hen. Well ! Mowbray, what of him ?

Mow. I wou'd 'twere less, than that I shall make known ;

Most vilely he doth wrong your Grace.

Hen. Have a care ! I do believe thee honest,

And think thou'st a tongue ne'er stoop'd to false-
hood !

I wou'd forgive that man, who spoke me truth,
Though he stood charg'd with foulest murder ;
But I wou'd spurn that soul wou'd tell a lie,
Tho' dearer to me e'en than life itself ;
For 'tis of sins the meanest, the most vile !
Beware of malice ; thus far I warn thee !
And now proceed.

Mow Weigh well my words, I do beseech your
Grace !

For shou'd I speak more than truth, tho' it be
In the uttering of one syllable,
Spurn me to foot ! call me base liar !
This will I bear from you, my royal sir !

Hen.

Hen. To thy purpose then.

Mow. When Chancellor, you lent Becket monies !

Hen. I did.

Mow. And think those monies well applied ?

Hen. I do believe so !

Mow. Fore God ! then I do pledge myself they are not.

And as I speak the truth, so may I answer !

990

Hen. Ha'ft ought else to add unto the charge ?

Mow. I have much more, and much worse too, my lord.

He hath drawn largely, from your treasury !

Hen. And to what end do this ?——

Mow. Tho' great my liege ! he wou'd be greater !

Hen. What ; aims he at our power then ?

Mow. Not so ; but fain wou'd be Rome's holy king !

Hen. How ! say you, Pope of Rome !

1000

Mow. I have said it, Sir !

Hen. And thou shal't answer it.

Mow. Most willingly my liege.

Enter LORD DE CLIFFORD.

Hen. My good Lord Clifford, knows he ought of this ?

Mow. He doth my liege !

Hen.

HENRY THE SECOND. 45

Hen. Well! be silent both I charge ye.

Both. We swear it Sir!

Hen. Mowbray! thou must hence to London!
We would at Clarendon meet all our lords,
And look I charge ye, Becket fail us not! 1010

[Takes a paper from his pocket.]

This order bearing our royal signet,
Shall command their attendance! make good
speed,

And remember that, thou hast to answer.

Mow. Fear me not; Sir, good health unto your
grace! *[Goes out.]*

Hen. The like to thee, farewell! My Lord
Clifford,

See all be ready for our journey hence,
And look you wake us, by five i'the morning.

Cliff. I shall my liege!

Hen. See that our favourite mettled steed,
Be saddled early. Farewel! 1020

Cliff. Sweet rest unto your grace!

London.

A Chamber.

Enter ELEANOR and RICHARD.

Ele. How wears the time, hath it yet gone
twelve?

Rich. Sweet mother, no! but it bears hard
upon.

I war-

46 HENRY THE SECOND.

I warrant me, they will not fail their time ;
O, here comes John, my brother !

Ele. Bring'st thou any tidings ?

John. Lord Leicester, and Lord Hugh will
soon be here !

Ele. Aye ! and Becket our Archbishop too.

Rich. What ! is he then with us, who is't did
this ? 1030

Ele. 'Twas I ! and were it not nobly done ?

Rich. Aye ! truly, but how did'st compass it ?

Ele. Ask me not here, I'll tell thee more at
leisure.

Enter LEICESTER and CHESTER.

Well ! good Leicester, how many are we strong ?

Leic. For mine own part, I muster full two
thousand,

And Lord Hugh Chester here, as many more.

John. My brother Richard, and myself com-
mand,

At least five thousand able fighting men.

Ireland shall send us full three thousand more !

Enter a Servant.

Serv. A messenger without 1040
Wou'd speak unto your grace.

Ele. Then shew him to our presence !

[*Exit Servant.*

Enter

Enter Messenger.

Whence come you Sir?

Mess. From William King of Scotland,—
Who with these letters greets your highness.

Ele. Go, get refreshment, and rest awhile!

[*Messenger goes out.*]

(*Opens the packet.*) Well, Lords! here is news
indeed!

By this I learn, Scotland is with us too.

'Twas I who stirr'd William our brother to this!

Gbes. I wou'd you had done the like by Mow-
bray; 1050

For he's in battle, a most valiant knight.

Leic. That were impossible! since with Henry,
He still remains the firm and steady friend.

Ele. So let him! we count thrice Harry's
number,

Besides, our troops are all prepar'd for war,
Whilst yet the King knows nothing of our aim.
How I do burn to shew him that I've done.
To make his stubborn, never bending knee
Kiss the bare ground, and for my pardon sue;
That were revenge indeed, revenge most sweet!

Enter

Enter BECKET.

Why art thou thus tardy, my Lord Archbishop?

1060

Beck. Most gracious Queen! I humbly do beseech,
That as I've well resolv'd this business,
You'll no further urge me, to act therein.

Ele. Why how now Becket?

Beck. Good Queen! my conscience wills it so.

Ele. Hold! I wou'd a word in private with you. *[Takes him aside.]*

When I to Rome did LETTERS write, I then
Did on thy piety and goodly deeds enlarge,
And gave thee virtues scarce to man belong'd.
Most patiently thy conscience bore all this;
Now in sooth thou hast receiv'd thine earnest,

1070

And like a cunning clerk would'st prate of conscience,

But I will all confess unto the King!
That he may know thee for an hypocrite,
This will I do, if thou remain not firm.

Beck. Think but a while how much the King
hath serv'd me!

How many favours he hath heap'd upon me;
Beseech you, lady, let me hence away!

Ele. Thou knowest my sentence! do as thou wilt.

Beck. Madam, I am yours! and must bow consent.

Ele. Why so 'tis best.

1080

Enter

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Roger Mowbray wou'd speak unto your Grace.

Beck. Bring him unto us.

Enter MOWBRAY.

Mow. At Clarendon, the King wou'd see you Lords ;

As he doth purpose there a Parliament :
He begs your Grace moreover will not fail.

Beck. We shall meet him there.—

Mow. Here is the order bearing his signet,
[*Takes out the paper which the King gave him.*
Which he bade me safe deliver to your hands.
Mine errand thus fulfill'd, I take my leave.

Leic. Yet hold ! good Mowbray, 1090
Thou art most true and faithful to the King.

Mow. And hope, my lord, I ne'er shall prove
other.

Leic. He doth but ill requite thy pains.

Mow. I think not so, for I have one reward
O'ertops all that majesty can bestow ;
'Tis greater far than title, riches, power ;
The mind's content—in honouring my King,
And loving my country, I gain all this,
What wou'd you more ? Malice or treason

E

Alike

Alike I defy——

My unstain'd soul shall wait death's direful blow,
And set but once to rise again for ever. 1100

Leic. Mowbray, farewell!

Mow. Health to you all.

Ele. We'll change his note, I warrant! [Goes out.]

Beck. I must follow him, for I have letters,
Which I wou'd that Mowbray bear unto the
King!

Ele. Thou art with us.

Beck. Most truly, so.

[Goes out.]

Rich. Now then, prepare we for the parliament!

John. And then for war— 1110

Rich. Leicester, assemble all your troops,
And with Earl Hugh, march on to Clarendon,
Ere night, myself and John shall overtake you.

Leic. & Ches. Fare ye well!

Rich. See, brother, the like be done by our
men;
And tell Earl Robert, we'll appoint the halt
At our next meeting; speed thee to do this!

John. I shall attend to it straight.

[Goes out.]

Rich. Sweet mother, thou wilt after us.

Ele. The loss of life alone, shall plead excuse.

Rich. 'Till next we meet farewell! 1120

Ele. Farewel! my gentle Richard.

SCENE.

SCENE.

A Hall at Clarendon.

KING, LORDS, ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, and
BECKET, *with Bishops assembled.*

Parchments, &c. laying on the table.

Hen. Though we our clergy much esteem, my
lords,

Our People are still most dear unto us :
We cannot therefore pass such crying deeds,
As late in violation of our laws,
We find our beadsmen have been charged withal ;
Drunkenness, gluttony, bloody murders,
Have partially been judg'd and pardon'd.
I therefore have thought meet to form an act,
Purporting to try the sins of churchmen, 1130
Not by theirs, but by the laws of the land.
As next to us in power, we call on you,
Our lord of Canterbury, to sign this !

*[Becket goes to the table and seemingly reads over
the parchment.]*

Beck. My liege, I dare not, for 'twou'd curb
the rights,
And weaken much the laws of holy church.

Hen. If holy be thy laws, why suffer they
Such bold, such impudent, such daring crimes

To pass unpunished, in the sight of God.
 The greatest of my peers for murder dies ;
 But you so wink at practises most vile,
 That they do fit you easy as your robes ;
 Tell me ! who gave ye these privileges ?

Beck. God's minister elect, the Pope of Rome !

Hen. I shame to hear thee speak thus ! why
 dost think

The hand of God wou'd sanction deeds like
 these ?

Beck. From him the Pope receives his holy
 trust,
 Whate'er he doth ordain, comes from above ;
 Therefore I will not to this act subscribe.

Hen. Proud upstart man ! but I will hold a
 awhile. 1150

My Lord of York, and you my bishops here,
 Wilt please ye, set your signets to this deed ?

York. For mine own part, most willingly !

*Archbishop of York and all the Bishops
 sign the deed.*

*Becket rises, and calls for the Seal of Chan-
 cellor, then going up to the table, throws
 it down.*

Beck. There, Sir ! take back your seal of Chan-
 cellor,
 Bestow it elsewhere ! I will no more on't.

Hen. But with it render me the sums I lent
 thee.

Beck. You never lent me ought.

Hen. Did'st not borrow of me four hundred
 marks ?

Beck.

HENRY THE SECOND.

53

Beck. Sir, you did give them to me!

Hen. By holy thorn! but thou shal't pay me
straight, 1160

Or else away to prison for't.

Beck. I am thy confessor, thy ghostly father!
Shou'd son e'er seek to crush his father?
Again I tell thee king! I'd rather die,
Than lessen in one point, my churches rights.

Hen. Proud, insolent clerk! as such thou
doest speak;
But I will check thy pride, ere I do leave thee.
Thou hast dealt freely with our treasury—

Beck. 'Tis false! by holy church, 'tis false. 1170

Hen. Mowbray, where art thou? stand now to
thy charge.

Mowbray rises from his seat.

Mow. Here, my liege, and to his teeth I tell
him,
He hath made free with thirty thousand marks!
And let him now deny it if he dare——

BECKET rises in a passion.

Beck. Take thou the lie! and wer't not for
my priesthood,
I wou'd against the charge defend myself,
With sword in hand, and make thy life answer it.

Mow. To thy soul again proud priest I give
the lie,
And say thou hast done that, and e'en much more!
Bring thine accounts, nay! prithee, start not thus.

E 3

Beck.

Beck. Vile infect! peace, I spurn thee.

Mow. Wou'd thou wer't other than thou art,
proud priest.

Mowbray going towards Becket enraged.

KING rises.

Hen. Sit! Mowbray, I charge thee sit.

Mow. O! such usage, my liege!—

Hen. Peace! I say.

Mow. I crave your highness pardon, for those
words

Were harsh enough to stir a coward's blood;
Yet I will obey, my lord.—

[Sits down.]

Hen. Wilt thou thy signet set hereto?

Beck. I dare not!—

Hen. Pay quickly then, that which thou ow'st
me.

Beck. Were it a just debt, Sire, I lack the
means.

Hen. Hie thee to prison then! and may thy
pride

Still bear thee up, and keep thee company.—

Art thou so stubborn and so hard of heart,

That we two, cannot dwell in this our land.

Tell me proud Clerk? must I lord it o'er thee,

Or is it great Becket's will, that I shou'd kneel,

And learn obedience? Insolent vain man!

Beck. I wou'd not Sir, you stoop'd unto my
will!

But wou'd, that you were govern'd by my coun-
cil.

As

As confessor, I know thy hidden sins.

Hen. I'll bear no longer—Without there, my guard!—

Leic. Hold! I will pay that he owes to you Sire!

Hen. Then do so, and I shall mark thee for it! Beneath this shew of liberality, Sure something lurks! Is man thus kind to man, And without cause? the world runs not so smooth.

Break up the council! Mowbray, follow me: But look to thyself, my good Lord Leicester.

[They all follow the King except Lord Leicester and Becket.]

Leic. My lord Archbishop, whither go you, now?

Beck. I shall with speed towards Canterbury.

Leic. And I to join the Queen and Princes.

Beck. Then bear to her this message, I pray thee!

Wer't not that now the king did threaten me,
Call'd me liar, and 'fore mine enemies,
Stain'd my honour, and used vile words withal,
I ne'er my vow of secrecy had broke,
But to be treated thus, I will not bear;
As holy confessor unto the King!
I can the cause of this neglect make known,
The Lord de Clifford's daughter, Rosamond;
'Tis she that fills the seat in Harry's heart;
And robs fair Ellen of her husband's love.

Leic. This is indeed, most base, but where dwells she?

Beck. Nigh Woodstock palace stands a secret bower,

The which, with so much art and skill is form'd,
That it defies the cunning of man's search!
For tho' you'd seem to pace it o'er and o'er,
You still return unto the self same spot,
By which you enter'd; known is the secret
Only to Mowbray and her father, Lord de Clifford.

Leic. I shall with speed, relate this to the Queen;

And much she will applaud thee for this news.
Farewel! my lord.

Beck. My love go with thee too, farewell!
Cou'd I mine eyes turn inward to my soul,
They'd find it care-worn, sick, nay, very sick!
My glory fades, my triumph's at an end.
I wish'd for more, yet greater shall not be:
A summons here bids me prepare for death!
O! 'tis a dreadful call, when our account
In Heav'n's great register, stands blotted.
A punishment, but for a time to bear
Were nothing, but to be for ever curst
To all eternity, 'tis horrible!
No end, no distant time, that one may say,
Thus much, and 'tis o'er, then am I happy!
But no! we must to never-ending fires;
Or chance, be plac'd beneath the thrones of those
That blessed are, and say within thyself,
Thus might I have been! 'tis a madning thought!
'Tis on this earth to me a very hell!—
I'll in, to Heaven breathe a fervent prayer!
Seek peace and comfort, for 'tis only there!

A Chamber.

Enter SIR REGINALD BERISON, SIR HUGH MOR-
VELE, SIR WM. TRACY, and SIR
RICHARD BRYTO.

Sir Hugh to Sir Reginald,

Did'st not mark the King?

Sir Reg. He seem'd in wrath——

Sir Rich. Rather say he was so, and with just
cause.

Sir Wm. Wou'd I had been Harry! when so
proudly

He did give up the seal of Chancellor—

His life shou'd scarce have satisfi'd my rage.

Sir Reg. Heard'st thou that, the King did say
but now?

Sir Hugh. I'll tell it—On entering his chamber,
He sat him down, and frowning leant on's hand;
The scarlet dye that flush'd upon his cheek,
Became all palid, then turn'd to red again.
Twice Mowbray did address him, but in vain;
No longer able to restrain his wrath,
In rage he thus burst forth—By holy thorn!
Is it not pity that no one present,
(For many here do call themselves my friends!)
Will here stand forth, and rid me of this man,
This haughty clerk, this insolent proud priest.—
More he said not, but leaning on his hand,
Again turn'd silent, and seem'd lost in thought!

Sir

Sir Rich. Shall we then prove his friends, and do this deed?

Where is Becket now?

Sir Reg. Gone hence to Canterbury——

Sir Rich. There let him stay—are we all agreed?

Sir Hugh. Aye, if he sign not to the king's act!

Sir Rich. Then let's away! arm ourselves and follow him.

All. Agreed!

A Chamber.

Enter ELEANOR and LEICESTER.

Ele. At Woodstock Bower, sayd'st thou?

Leic. Madam, I did.

Ele. For this, I thank thee Becket.
Patience avaunt! I will no more of thee.
Was I before a tigress in revenge?
I now am worse than tongue to ear can tell;
For I can act such things—but no matter,
Were this same Rosamond cas'd round with flint,
My nails, the rugged substance shou'd tear off,
Rend forth the heart from out her strumpet breast,
Then smiling tell the king, 'twas I that did it!

Leic. Madam, beware how you proceed in this,
Cunning and art will better serve your purpose.

Ele. Where is the Lord de Clifford now?

Leic. At Woodstock, as I guess.

Ele. How say you?
Did he not attend the parliament?

Leic.

HENRY THE SECOND. 59

Leic. He did ; but ere the council was broke
up,

At Clarendon he took horse, and left us.

Ele. Went Mowbray thither too ?

Leic. No, he rested with the king.

Ele. Alone ! why then 'tis just as I wou'd have
it ;

I must away ; do you unto my sons,
'Tell them ere time hath worn three days compleat,
I shall again be with them.—Fare thee well !

SCENE—*Canterbury Cathedral.*

BECKET comes slowly forward seeming thoughtful.

Man hath his day of joy and misery !
How short the one, how lasting is the other !
With me the first is long blown o'er, and now
The second comes, to mock my tortur'd soul,
With ideot laughter, ringing to mine ears
My loss of power, my faded glory —
This overpeering front ! that bore a sun
Outshone the girdled brow of majesty,
Now clouded, dim, and pale. O ! I am sick.
Tush ! tush ! the sleep of death will cure all
thoughts :

And yet, must this my wholesome goodly flesh
Rot, and serve to feed the crawling earth-worm,
Who nothing favours but of dust and clay ;—
I tremble at the thought ; and e'en but now—
They wind about my flesh, and to the feel
Are damp, and cold, as that same horrid sweat,
Which frets from out the front of dying man !
Yet it must be so, death will have his due,

The

60 HENRY THE SECOND.

The worm will feast his fill, and man must rot—
Thus much for the body corruptible!
As for the soul!—I wou'd, but cannot speak,
And were I, all wou'd be conjectural,——
My account wou'd stand as clear at the last,
As now, that I have nothing uttered.

Enter JOHN DE SALISBURY.

Salis. Letters from the Queen, my lord!

Beck. Take them hence!——

I'll stir no more in this rebellion.

Salis. How say you, Sir! Rebellion?

Beck. I have spoke too much, yet what matters it?

Yes! Salisbury, I am that godly man,
Who have repay'd the bounty of his Prince
With damned treason—O! curs'd ambition,
To thee! I long ago have sold my peace,
And now my life must answer for the fault.
Now what think you, Sir? I am a traitor!
And worse! for I have broke my oath to God,
Told to mens ears, those secrets which the King
Did breathe to me his ghostly confessor——
O! I am a poor wretched, lost, lost man.

Salis. And yet you are my gracious master still—

Beck. Leave me! I prithee leave me.

Salis. O turn not thus from thy true Salisbury!
I will not quit, but hang upon this robe,
Till you look down upon your once lov'd friend!
This out-stretch'd hand, which fain wou'd bid me
hence,

Thus let me kiss! and its unkindness shame.

Beck. Can'st thou then look upon me with
pity?

Is

HENRY THE SECOND. 61

Is thy good heart so soft that it doth melt
Like snow-drop, thus to behold my greatness?
Which once did shine as bright as mid-day sun,
But now! is set for ever. O! can'st thou
Weep so fast, and for a poor fall'n man!

Salis. I have a memory of what is past;
Can view my present state, and that it was,
Can say here is the man, hath done all this!
Hath cloath'd and fed me, been to me a father!
This self same man doth fall, and shall not I
Remember such things were, and stoop to save
him?

O! yes, and give up fortune, life, nay all.

[Kneels to Becket, who embraces him.]

Beck. I did not think such virtue dwelt on
earth;
No more! I'll weep upon my present woes;
For they have taught me what a man may be,
Who keeps his conscience clear, and free from sin.
They have instructed me, that here below,
The friend you have in high prosperity,
May in adversity, prove still the same.
Yes! for my Salisbury is yet most true,
Had I been alway great, I ne'er had known this.
Now let us to prayer! ———

*Enter Priests, bearing the chalice and crosier, with
others following, clad in white, they go
up to the altar, BECKET and
SALISBURY follow.*

Enter a MONK in seeming haste.

Monk. Fly! fly! save yourself my Lord Arch-
bishop ———

[Becket turning from the steps of the altar.]
Beck.

Beck. What means this ?

Monk. Four Knights, all arm'd ! are seeking for
your Grace,
They rail'd against you, and did mutter threats ;
On questioning their errand, they answer'd,
We come from Henry ! to seek a traitor.—
Beseech you, away my lord, and save yourself.

Beck. 'Tis done ! my time is come, and I
must die ;
I feel, I know it, and am prepar'd.

Salis. You shall, you must away, my lord.
[Tries to force him out.

Beck. Off with your hands ! I love thee Sa-
lisbury—
And wou'd not quit thee, with an angry thought.
For thy zeal, my thanks ! but all is vain,
My lamp is out !—Weep not ! we soon shall meet.
Our souls will join again, in heav'n for ever.

Enter the four Knights.

Sir Reg. Where is Becket ? Where is the traitor ?

Beck. Hold ! I answer to the name of Becket,
But not to that of traitor : your will Sirs,
And how dare ye thus my church profane !
Your bodies cas'd in rude and warlike steel,
Your caps lock'd on your brows, your beavers
down,

Which shou'd be off, in such a holy place,
A house of peace, and not a field of battle !

Sir Hugh. We stand not upon ceremony.

Beck. 'Twere better Sirs you did ! who are ye ?

Sir Hugh. We from insulted majesty are come,
To know if thou unto his act will sign ?

Beck.

HENRY THE SECOND. 63

Beck. Then briefly I reply, I will not —
'Twou'd weaken much the pow'r of holy church,
So get ye hence ! and bear this answer back ;
Or rather (for well I know your errand)
Compleat your work, (*he smiles in contempt*) 'twill
do ye honour Sirs.

Sir Hugh. Dar'st thou to mock us with rude
contempt ?

'Twere better thou did'st sooth us with fair words.

Beck. Peace ! I say — What ! I sooth, I flatter ye,
Know ye my station, Sirs, and who I am ?
Thomas, holy Lord of Canterbury !
The King and I, or Becket and Henry,
Are but the self-same thing.

Sir Reg. Hear ye this ?

Salis. For heavens grace, Sir, do not thus urge
them.

Beck. Your ear, Sirs ! I meant not to lisp my
words,

An 'twill please ye ! I shall again rehearse : —
Yet wherefore waste my speech upon such things ?
Were ye true men, you'd shew your faces bare,
But now ye come to act a damned deed,
And shrink to let men peep upon your looks ;
But know ! there is an eye can pierce that steel,
A mighty hand ! will crush the guilty soul,
A righteous God ! to judge the murderer.

Sir Hugh. And to condemn thee, traitor which
thou art !

Beck. Were I elsewhere than in this fainted
place,
Tho' clad but as I am, in these thin robes,
I wou'd against ye all oppose myself,
Wou'd singly crush those arms ye but disgrace,
And to perdition downward hurl your souls. —

Sir

Sir-Reg. I'll bear no more! that for thy words—
Strikes at him with his sword, Salisbury
holds out his arm, and receives the blow,
the Priests all affrighted, retire, except
Salisbury. Becket tries to wrench a
sword out of one of their hands.

Beck. Why now! ye show yourselves, but I'll
 grapple.

Another Knight behind strikes him on the head.

Sir Hugh. Thy labour is but vain, have at thee!—
Becket falls with one knee on the step of the
altar, Salisbury holds him up, kneeling
by him.

Beck. O God! and thou Saint Denis! at whose
 shrine

I now receive the all-dread blow of death,—
 To thee, I offer up my parting soul.

[They strike him again.]

Beck. Again a blow! *[Strikes again.]*
 And now another!—O Salisbury!
 Take me to thine arms, I die a martyr—
 O Lord! all merciful! forgive my sins!
 'Tis done! my God forgives, he pardons me.
 And thus, thus, my soul flies up to heaven! *[Dies.]*

Salis. Amen! amen! my noble master.

Sir Hugh. Now we have done the deed, let's
 unto his house,
 Seal up his goods, then onward to the King!
 Come then! about it straight. *[Exeunt.]*

The Monks enter in Procession, and sing a Requiem to
solemn Music.

SCENE

SCENE *changes to a Chamber in the Palace, London.*

HENRY and MOWBRAY.

Hen. How say you, Mowbray?

Mow. Your people of the North, are all in arms,

And headed are, by Ellen and your sons.

Hen. How many are they strong?

Mow. Full nine thousand! and secretly I learn William the Scottish King is with them join'd, Who to their number adds six thousand more:— They fear not, but loudly do defy you!

Hen. My wife! my sons! all leagu'd at once against me!

Was ever curse, upon a parent's head,
Pour'd down with so much vengeance as on mine?

Why toils the father for his infant child?
Since he but warms a snake to sting his peace;
At once, 'twere better population ceas'd,
Than stock the world with beings such as these.
I cou'd now o'erturn this wide expanse,
Change the general face of all creation,
Making the world a second chaos!

Wishing I were unborn!—what must be done?

Mow. 'Twere better we make head against them.

Hen. What numbers have we?

Mow. Near seven thousand!

Hen. The odds are great against us then.

Mow. Even so, Sir.

Hen. Where is that proud, that haughty Becket?

Mow. He left the parliament for Canterbury.

F

Enter.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. One in seeming haste wou'd speak unto your Grace !

Hen. Shew him before us !

Enter one of Becket's Gentlemen.

Hen. Whence come you Sir ?

Gent. From Canterbury.

Hen. From Becket ! I suppose,
Well, Sir ! What news from him ?

Gent. Alas ! I come, and most unwillingly,
To say, my lord and master's murder'd.

Hen. How ! murder'd—Who hath done this vile deed ?

Gent. Four knights, my lord, belonging to the court.

They did moreover say, 'twas by your will.

Hen. How ! but they shall justly answer for it.

Mow. Right well I know those that have done this act ;

At Clarendon, you left the parliament,
And in much choler, some words did 'scape you,
That scarce were utter'd, but you did repent ;
Yet from those items, hath this deed been done.

Hen. O ! this, this is the very curse of kings !
If we but nod, that nod must be obey'd ;
And though we only have the thought of sin,
Yet are there many that furround the throne,
Who to gain love and favour of their Prince,
Will nourish and ripen such sinful thoughts,
'Till in the soul, they take a lasting root,
And in the end seal us for destruction.

Mow.

HENRY THE SECOND. 67

Mow. 'Twere fit, my Prince, you think on
your safety.

Hen. Where lies the enemy?

Mow. They come to meet us in Northumber-
land.

Hen. On then! and march we our men thither
too!

They aid, with mighty numbers a bad cause.

Ours is stronger, 'tis upheld by justice.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE.

Distant View of Alnwick, in Northumberland.

Enter PRINCE RICHARD, JOHN, and HENRY,
WILLIAM KING OF SCOTS. HUGH EARL
OF CHESTER, ROBERT EARL OF
LEICESTER, and Army.

Drums beating.

Rich. Halt! Thus far have we march'd,
crown'd with success,

No siege, no battle yet, hath worn our troops,
No garrison hath dar'd to stop our course,
But all obediently have ope'd their gates,
And friendly been unto us. Tell me now!
How call you this place?

Leic. They name it Alnwick.

Rich. Encamp we here, this ground doth like
us well;

Have yet our scouts brought tidings of the King?

Ches. Yea, good Prince, he marches slowly hi-
ther.

F 2

Rich.

68 HENRY THE SECOND.

Rich. What power brings he?

Ches. Scarce seven thousand men.

Rich. So few! why sure he sleeps, but we'll rouse him.

Tell me noble William! do'st not think so?

Wm. From our Scot's horn we'll an alarum sound,

Shall stir his sluggard soul, I warrant me.

Thrice hath thy father batter'd down my arms,

Degraded and dishonour'd me, but now!

The time is come, that I shall mock in turn.

[*Drums beat.*]

Enter QUEEN ELEANOR.

Ele. My sons, my noblemen! how fare ye all!
This is a joyful and a seemly fight.

Rich. Here is the hardy William, King of Scots,

Who, with his power did join us yesternight.

Ele. Welcome our brother, welcome unto us.

Rich. Heard'st thou, by the way, of noble Becket?

Ele. Too much I fear, unwelcome is the news!
Oh! my gentle Richard, alas! he's slain.

Rich. Where, and by whom?

Ele. Four knights, dispatch'd by Harry, as I hear,

Murder'd him, i'th' Church at Canterbury.

Rich. Deed most foul! yet shall it to us prove fair.

Just Heav'n will crown our arms with victory,
Making us instruments of their vengeance.
But where's thy rival? where is Rosamond?

Ele. No matter! —

She ne'er again will cross me in my love.

Rich.

HENRY THE SECOND. 69

Rich. Have you imprison'd her, is she then safe?

Ele. Aye! if death can make her so.

Rich. O mother, mother! this is too much—

Ele. I came not hither to seek thy counsel.

Rich. 'Twere better madam, had you so done.

Ele. No more, Sir! she's poison'd, and I'm content.

Go! prate thy counsel to the howling winds;
They, not I, may chance listen to thy moan;
Or rather, go weep with Lord de Clifford——
Thoult find him i'the camp, chain'd and my prisoner.

[*A trumpet sounds.*]

Enter MOWBRAY, with a Herald.

Your errand, Sir?

Mow. I come, with gracious offers from the King;

If it so please you, grant a hearing.

Ele. Proceed, Sir!

Mow. He will'd, that thrice his herald shou'd sound forth,

Ere I made known to you my embassy.

[*Herald sounds three times.*]

Henry the Second, just King of England,
Doth here arraign Richard, John, and Harry,
The lawful sons and heirs of his body,
With Eleanor, their mother; also
Earl Robert, and Hugh Earl of Chester,
With others here not nam'd, guilty of high treason!

But shou'd they now confess their rebellion,
Dismiss their followers, and sue for mercy,
To all, save only William of Scotland,
Most graciously his pardon he doth grant.

If stubborn, ye chance refuse this offer,
 No tie of blood will soften his vengeance ;
 The yearnings of a parent will be hush'd.—
 Nor shew the mercy of a conqueror.

Ele. Go ! bear this answer back unto the king ;
 We spurn his offer, and defy his rage.—
 From us, a speech like this, had sounded well.
 We from thy master, did expect fair words,
 Not threats like these.—Begone ! you know our
 will.

Mow. Wou'd ye, that I bear this answer back?

Ele. Aye ! and take good heed you soften not
 the phrase.

Leic. (*Scoffingly.*) Good Mowbray, gentle
 Mowbray, fare thee well !

Mow. My lord ! a word with you.

[*Leicester goes to him.*]

When I do jeer, Sir, 'tis not with my tongue ;
 This is the instrument which I do use.

[*Putting his hand on his sword.*]

And this the arm, that works it, do't hear me ?

[*Holds up his right hand.*]

I shall in fight, 'gainst thee oppose myself,
 'Tis there I'll answer this your mockery,
 And deal so roughly with your lordship's crest,
 That were my lady's monkey in the field,
 He'd maul and make a plaything of your bear,
 And wrench from out his paw, the ragged staff.
 Such a crest suits well an apish bearer ;
 Flout not good my lord ! I ne'er do flatter.

Leic. So, Sir, it shou'd seem —

[*Attempts to draw his sword.*]

Mow Hold ! my Lord, I am a blunt English-
 man,

And in that title, boast an unstain'd soul,
 A hand, that ne'er hath grip'd a rebel sword,

But

HENRY THE SECOND.

71

But always borne the steel 'gainst such as thee,
Enemies of our true anointed King.
Though I wou'd fain chastise that perjur'd heart,
And teach thee what it is to wear a ioul,
That only lives to guard its country's rights;
Yet by your leave! a lady claims respect.

[*Bows to the Queen.*

Farewel! to-morrow i'th' field we'll meet,
Then remember, or one, or both must fall.

[*Goes out.*

Leic. I do accept the challenge.

Ele. Come, sirs! I pray you now let's in and rest.

By times to-morrow, we'll attack the King;
Therefore good night, and peace be with you all.

All. Sweet Queen, farewell!

[*Drums beat.*

KING HENRY'S Camp.

Enter HENRY and MOWBRAY.

Hen. They wou'd not listen to my terms!

Mow. They did refuse, and spurn'd your offer.

Hen. Saw'st thou the Scottish King?

Mow. Aye! my lord.

Hen. Well! see my arms be laid within my tent,

And then get thee to rest.

[*Mowbray kneels.*

Mow. Yet ere I go, thus on my bended knee
I wou'd intreat a favour of your Grace.

Hen. Then ask! I am not want to deny thee.

Mow. So please it then, that you permit me
Sire,

To range my troops 'gainst those of Lord Leicester.

F 4

Hen,

72 HENRY THE SECOND.

Hen. Thy boon is granted! so good night.

[*Mowbray rises.*

Mow. Thank your grace! now fly thou creeping night,

And let bright day light me to victory.

May gentlest sleep attend your highness' couch.

[*Goes out.*

Hen. Why fare thee well, and to thy wish, amen!

Yet amen! will not close these care-worn eyes,

Nor lull this troubled soul, for one short hour,

Within thy arms, Oh! sleep, thou nurse of care!

What avails my sceptre, ball, nay crown itself?

All will not purchase soft and sweet repose!

The wretch who toils throughout the sun's bright course,

Tho' he be stretch'd upon the flinty rock,

And lies not further from its lofty brink,

Than half his body's length, e'en such a man,

Thou'lt hug, altho' the roaring sea itself

Conjoin, to make the spot more horrible!

The peasant labours for his daily food,

And hourly sweats from bodily fatigue:

But O! how different stands the case with me!

I for a nation toil, and if I sin,

Millions of souls rain curses on my head.

I see it now! the man whom fortune woos,

Will ne'er be woo'd by thee! Wherefore is it?

That now the curse of Heav'n roars against me,

Louder and hotter, than 'tis wont to do!

I ne'er kill'd my father, deny'd my God!

Yet doth my own flesh seek to destroy me.

Is it, O Lord! that I am worse in sin?

Or that the deeds of my forefathers gone,

Are reckon'd up, and I am singled out

To answer all? Yet be it as it may,

Do not suffer O merciful Father!

That I, to-morrow, in the bröl of war,

Shou'd

HENRY THE SECOND. 73

Shou'd strike my flesh, and spill my children's blood.

My life be forfeit, and not theirs O Lord!
I'll in, and wear away this dismal night
In pray'r, and offering tears of penitence.

A Field.

Soldiers fighting, Drums beating, &c.

Enter MOWBRAY.

Mow. Already is the field one sea of blood!
Which thrice I have o'er trod, yet find him not.
Shou'd this day's fight be ended ere we meet,
I shall grow sick, in very grief of heart.

Enter LEICESTER in haste.

Leic. Come forth! and face me, where art thou
Mowbray?

Mow. Here! here! and for this fight, I thank
thee, Mars!
Now breast to breast, and steel to steel oppos'd,
Thus fight we, 'till of one the life be clos'd!

They fight, Mowbray beats off Leicester.

Enter WILLIAM KING OF SCOTS.

Flourish of Drums, &c.

Wm. Whither shall I fly? triumphant Harry!
Like that same lion blazon'd on his shield,
Roars death to us and to our host! curs'd hour!
That I shou'd live again to grace his vict'ry!

Enter

Enter KING HENRY, with his Helmet on.

Hen. Beshrew me, now ! but I do know thee well !
And long have fought thee ! Thou'rt the Scottish King !
Then turn thy sword where it shall honour reap,
If it prove victor ! I am King Henry !
Thou'rt my equal—A king against a king,
O glorious thought ! thus ! thus ! have at thee then !

[They fight, King of Scots flies.]

Enter PRINCE RICHARD, with his Beaver down.

Thou fleest ! and haply for thee, here is one,
Who like thy guardian angel, lights on earth,
To stay that death, which else wou'd have been thine.

[Harry and Richard fight, then pause.]

Hen. Stand aloof ! thou art in fight, so passing hot !

That I cou'd almost stamp thee for my blood.

Rich. Why pause ye Sir ? come on again !

Hen. Yet hold ! I wou'd thy beaver were unlock'd,

That I might view thy face. A deadly sweat
Pours down my feverish limbs, when thus I raise
My steel against thy breast—I will no more.

Rich. Then thou art my prisoner.

Hen. Nay, first I will uncase, and shew myself,

If

HENRY THE SECOND. 75

If then thou know'st me not, we'll to't again,
And shou'd I slay thee, thou wil't nobly die!

[Turning up his beaver.

For Henry of England is thy rival!

*Richard drops his sword, kneels, and takes
his father round the knees.*

Rich. Gracious gods!—my father!

Hen. O! say, art not Richard, my eldest born?

[Richard raises his beaver.

Rich. I was, I was, but am no longer so!

For I have rebell'd against my parent;
I am unnatural, have broke those bonds,
Which in a child, shou'd strengthen with his years;
O never, never more!——

Can I make peace with God, or thee my fire.

Hen. Rise, my son; from me thou hast forgiveness.

[Embraces him.

But remember, thy God must pardon too.

*[Shouting without, victory! victory! King
Henry hath gain'd the day.*

Hen. This shout doth hail me master of the
field;

Follow! my child, I will unto my tent,
And offer thanks to God; come, cheer thee up.

[Exeunt.

KING

KING HENRY'S Tent.

HENRY seated on a chair of state, QUEEN ELLEN,
 PRINCES JOHN, HENRY and RICHARD,
 HUGH OF CHESTER, ROBERT OF
 LEICESTER, and WILLIAM
 KING OF SCOTLAND, in
 chains, Prisoners with
 Guards, &c.

Drums and Trumpets sound.

Hen. Let yon rude clamor cease! now tell me,
 Sirs,
 And you, our once lov'd queen, that gave them
 birth:

Why have ye dar'd to stain my peaceful land,
 And drench my fertile plains in English blood?
 Have ye forget your duty to your God,
 And can ye thus upon a parent dare to look,
 Who gave you being!
 Oh shame, shame! thus to league with foul re-
 bellion.

John. (*The other Princes kneel.*) Forgive! O,
 pardon us, gentle father,
 The crime lies with our mother, not with us.

Ele. Spare thy tongue the labour of recital,
 I do confess it, and glory in the deed.

Enter MOWBRAY and LORD DE CLIFFORD.

Hen. Good Heav'ns! Lord Clifford, how cam'st
 thou here?

Ele.

HENRY THE SECOND; 77

Ele. His tears may stop the current of his speech;

Thus! then it is. 'Twas I brought him hither,
'Twas I poison'd his daughter, thy mistress!
And 'twas revenge! that urg'd me to this deed.

Hen. Poison'd!—What, my Rosamond dead!

Mow. My liege, 'tis most true.

The noble Clifford here, hath told me all.

Hen. For this deed, may'st thou stand for aye
abhorr'd.

My Rose gone for ever! The sweetest flow'r
That e'er did kiss the bosom of the wind,
Or spread its fragrance to the May-morn sun!
Abandon'd woman—— [To the Queen.

Bear her from my sight, lead her to prison,
There let her pass the remnant of her days,
In penitence and pray'r.—Bear her hence, I say.—

[Guards lead her out.

And lead Earl Robert and Hugh Chester, straight
To execution—See, Mowbray, it be done.

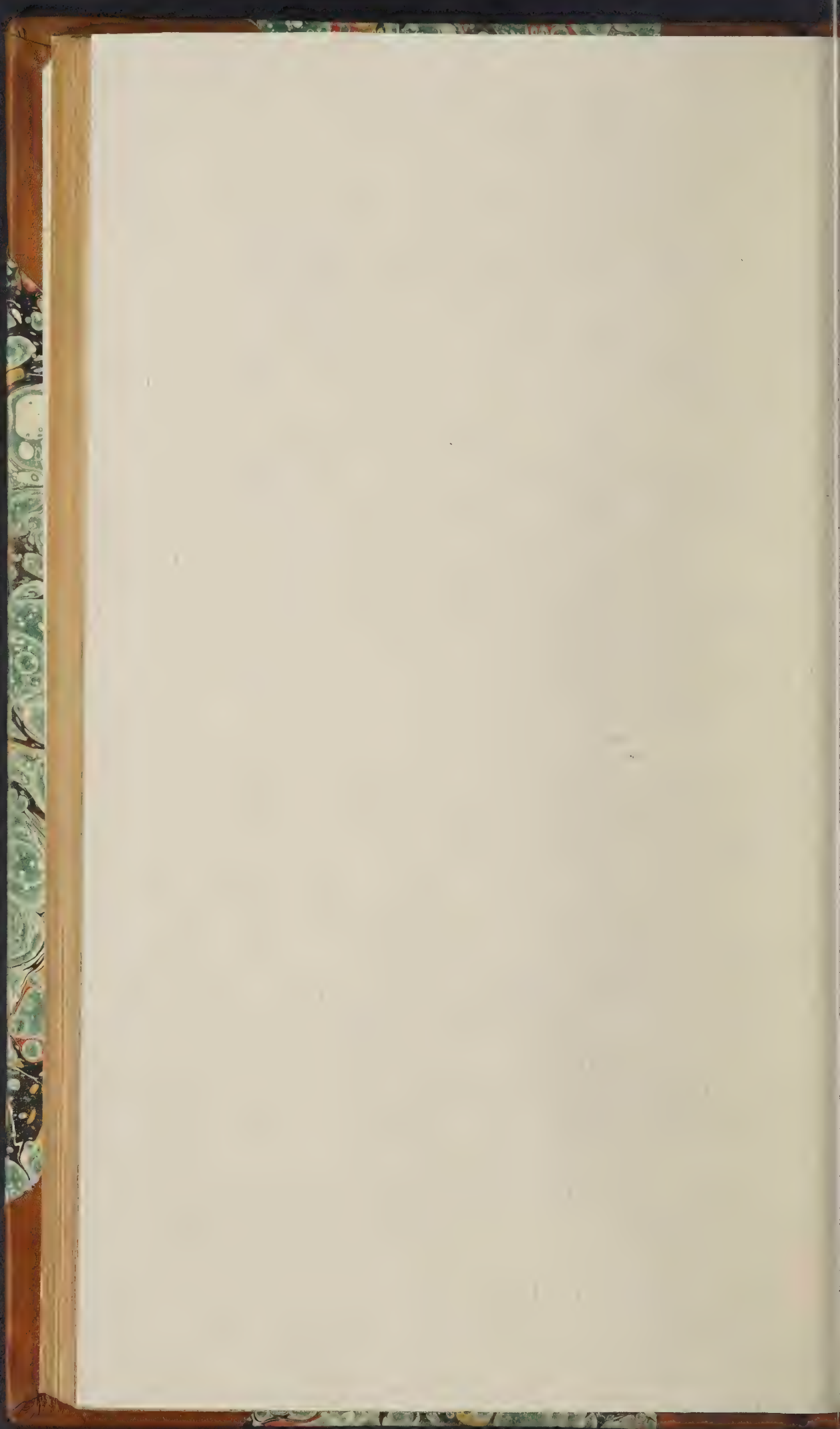
[Mowbray leads out Chester and Leicester.

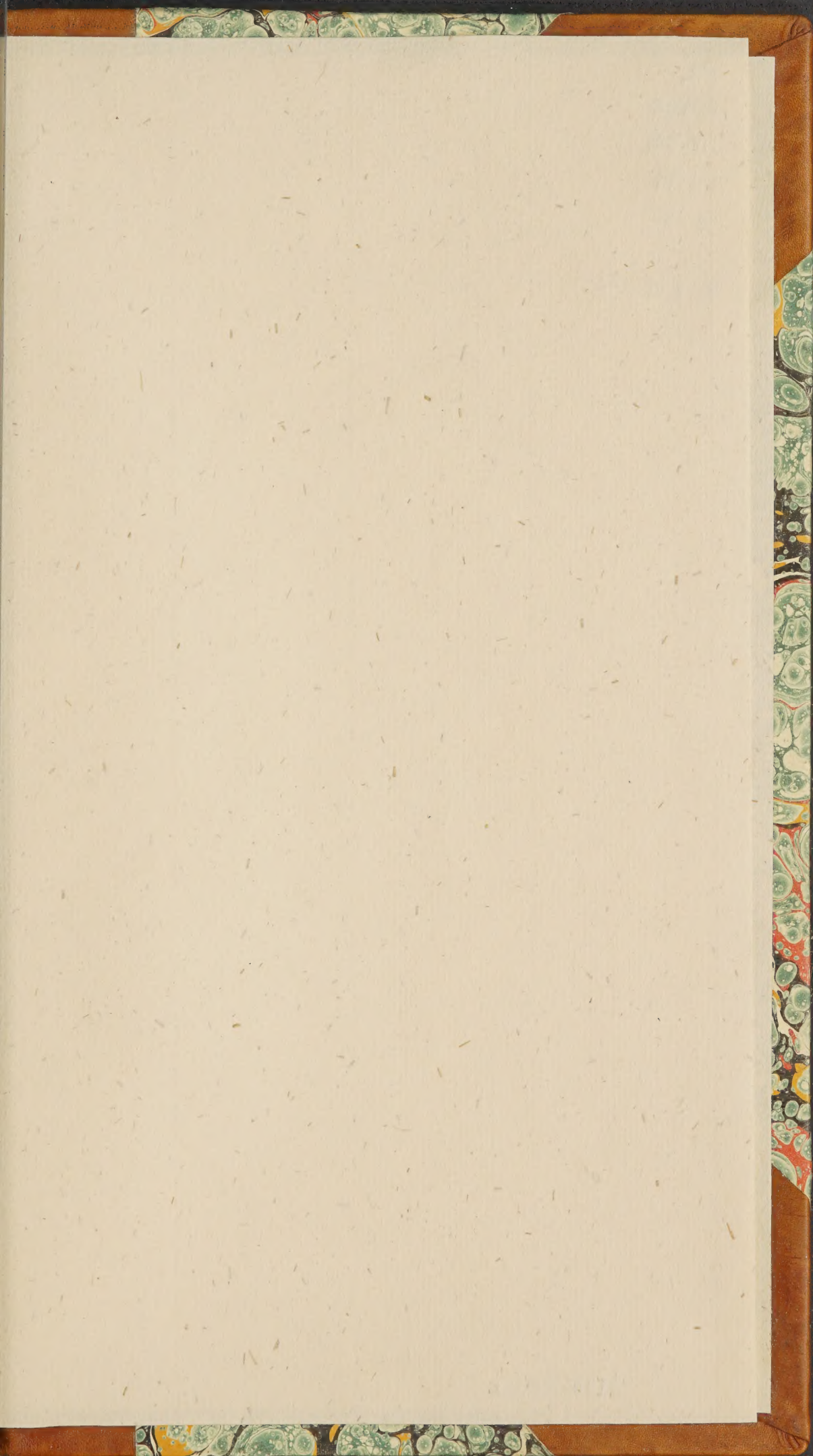
And as the crime most foul was not your own,
To you my sons, Richard, John, and Harry,
I here my pardon and forgiveness grant;
But for that ambitious King of Scots,
We hold him pris'ner, until he pay us
Ten thousand marks, for ransom of his person.
See therefore, that he be strictly guarded.
Now we'll to Woodstock, take one last farewell,
Ere that my Rosamond be laid in earth;
Then cross the seas for France, where, as I hear,
They fain again wou'd seize on Normandy,
And curb our lion's glory.

F I N I S.

EPILOGUE.

IF from our Play returning to your homes,
 Ye chance to read this story as 'tis writ;
 And find our Harry cross the seas for France,
 Our Becket unto Rome for succour fly,
 Thence unto Louis' court to meet his king;
 Where friends ye find, this haughty priest once
 more
 Invited home unto his dignities.
 When this ye read, do not your author blame;
 He cou'd not bear ye on swift lightning's wing,
 O'er billowing seas, deserts and gay towns;
 Or shew within the compass of one hour,
 The business of a twenty summer's course;
 Yet shou'd ye frown, look back upon his Play,
 And let our Harry's courage and sweet love,
 Forgiveness beg for his o'erleaping time.
 Our haughty and ambitious Becket too,
 Shall plead the lack of place: Yet after all,
 Shou'd any present still remain unkind,
 And carry with him to his nightly couch,
 The frown of discontent; O, shou'd this be;
 Then think how much the writer here hath toil'd
 To please, and shew in this our Harry's reign,
 The pride and glory of our English land,
 The unstain'd thunder of our regal lion;
 No brow so rough, but sure will smooth at this,
 No frown so black, but will to sweetness turn,
 And bright as sun when bursting from the East,
 Drive night away.—Yet why intreat ye thus?
 No more! no more! ye smile and look so sweet,
 I'll to our young and trembling author say,
 Ye heard, ye smil'd, and did applaud his Play.





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